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MY EXPERIENCES OF

THE WAR BETWEEN FRANCE AND GERMANY

BY

ARCHIBALD FORBES.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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"News of battle! News of battle!
Hark! 'tis ringing down the street;
And the archways and the pavement
Bear the clang of hurrying feet.
News of battle! Who has brought it?"

W. E. Aytoun, *Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers.*

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THE WAR

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FRANCE AND GERMANY.

BY

ARCHIBALD FORBES,

ONE OF THE SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS OF "THE DAILY NEWS."

COPYRIGHT EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1871.

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PREFACE.

It is right to state that a large proportion of the material of these two volumes consists of letters contributed to "The Daily News," so far as concerns the events written of in Parts II., III., and IV.; to "The Morning Advertiser," as regards Part I. I have modified, excised, and re-written not a little, only to find the desire, which cannot be gratified, grow stronger and stronger to re-write the whole. As it is, what follows can claim to be no more than an honest narrative of events which passed within my own ken; nor did I allow any consideration to deter me from bringing as many events as possible within my ken. Yet even of these the book makes no pretensions to be a historical record; but it may be of some service to the historian which the late war is sure to evoke.

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MY EXPERIENCES

OF THE

WAR BETWEEN FRANCE & GERMANY.

PART I.

THE STROKES OF THE SLEDGE-HAMMER.

CHAPTER I.

The early Days.

He must have lived in some very sequestered vale indeed who did not in some measure participate in the thrill of excitement which ran through Britain on that day, the 15th of July, 1870, on which the Duc de Grammont in his master's name proclaimed that France had resolved to make war with Prussia. The general impression probably was, that there would be a pitched battle the same evening, and when day after day passed and no overt warfare was reported of a more serious character than the blowing-up of a bridge, the capture of a couple of douaniers, or the harmless exchange of shots between the hostile pickets and patrols on the frontier line, the intensity of the concentrated expectancy only grew keener because of the lurid hush that preceded the breaking of the storm. In these early days, while access was possible to the vicinity of the frontier line—on the German side at least—there was little of interest to

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attract anyone whose mission it was to contribute what he might toward feeding the popular appetite with what has come to be known ever since the Crimean times as "War Correspondence." But there was no lack in Germany of more interesting work than competing with Reuter in the transmission of telegrams, or in gazing continuously across the boundary line through a field-glass on the chance of seeing a few brisk little men in red breeches popping out and in among the trees. One might see with his own eyes the working of that huge machine, on the elaboration of every cog and pinion of which von Moltke and his subordinates had bestowed so much pains. The word had gone forth for the mobilisation of the German army a few days before I reached Cologne, on the 19th July. Already, before leaving London, I had noticed and wondered what a power and scope had this machine—the German military system—that it could bridge the Channel and sweep into its feeder with a suction-power not to be resisted, Germans long resident in Britain, and unthirled from the machine save by the astriction of patriotism. There was little need in these days of July to ask one's way to the office of the North German Consul in the city. You knew you were coming to the Consulate before you got within sight of it. The pavements were thronged by Germans who monopolised the "crown of the causeway" with a stolid masterful good humour which was not to be gainsaid. You might have walked over the heads of the densely-packed mass of men who stood about wedged in, chatting, smoking, spitting, grumbling occasionally—not viciously—at the delay they experienced in getting their passports put in order. I should think at least three hundred Germans were in waiting for their passports when I procured my *visa*. Four-fifths of the men

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—for the most part stalwart, lissom young fellows—were starting to join the German army. There was no compulsion on them, save what we might call moral compulsion. They might have become naturalised Englishmen on their arrival among us, or at all events when they found themselves beginning to have a stake in the country. But Fatherland was their all-in-all. They had thrown up, not a few of them, positions of high trust and considerable emolument, that they might return to serve in its ranks as private soldiers. Nor was there any impulsive, thoughtless recklessness in the step. On the contrary, many of them regretted, in my hearing, that prospects so good should thus be thrown to the winds; but in this regret was not mingled a tinge of recalcitrancy. It seemed as if they had never so much as let the consciousness dawn upon them that it was possible to draw back. What they were doing was a simple matter of inevitable duty. And it appeared to me that it was in true consistency that there should have been but little display of enthusiasm. They seemed to know each that his neighbour was genuine, without bursting out into spasmodic professions of devotion and mutual exhortations savouring of "high-falutin." Several policemen were among the number, and I was sorry to find—while the *employés* of private persons had not only been treated liberally as regarded the present, but in many cases, on the part both of English and foreign houses, had been promised favourable consideration on their return to claim their hurriedly-vacated situations—that the public servants had been very scurvily dealt with. One policeman, who was a third-class constable, notwithstanding that he spoke four languages, and saved the force the cost of an interpreter, had been suspended summarily immediately on his intimating that duty to his

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native country compelled him to quit the police; had been deprived of his uniform without a moment's warning, and in a contumelious manner; had been refused any testimonial as to character, and finally was about to leave England, leaving behind a week's wages which were owing to him, and payment of which was withheld. It was not a time favourable for the voyaging of the migratory Britons, who are wont to crowd the Channel boats in the later summer months. Such of our countrymen as were to be found on foreign shores were for the most part hurriedly betaking themselves to their insular fatherland to be out of harm's way and the evil days that were dreaded; and if perchance you encountered a few with their faces turned the other way, those faces were set and anxious, for their owners were hurrying to bring home children or relatives from school or residence in some German town—peaceable enough still, but ere long, it might be, to be the scene of a battle and the victim of a hostile occupation. But the Ostend boats, for a few weeks at all events in the beginning of the war, did not miss the suspension of the tourist exodus. There was hardly standing room on their decks, thronged as they were by Germans crowding home to swell the great national army. The night I crossed I had a talk with two men who had come all the way home from New York for this purpose, having started as soon as the first tidings of a probable rupture crossed the Atlantic, and they assured me that they would be speedily followed by vast numbers. What an extraordinary compound were they of Germano-Yankee financial 'cuteness and pure single-hearted patriotic zeal! Long and regretfully did they discourse about the ill-effects of the war-panic; how this security went down seven per cent., and that ten. But their quiet, contented conclusion was,

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"Never mind, Germany will conquer, and what for that is the money?" No German seemed to doubt that Germany would ultimately conquer; but there were few who had not made up their minds to lose a battle or two at the outset, and that for sure the opening scene at least of the stupendous drama would be played within the borders of their native land. How the world halted between two opinions till Wörth and Spicheren gave data not to be resisted, seems strange and half unreal now when we have so long stood in the full light of after-experience.

When I reached Cologne on the 19th July, working parties had already begun to fell the trees on the ramparts and to face up the scarps of the outlying forts. A state of siege had been formally declared, so that the place might be got in trim for an actual siege if the fortune of war and the traditional dash of the French should bring the crest of the wave to lap against the hoary fortifications of the ancient Rhineland city. And then, too, not in the city alone, but in every village and parish throughout the length and breadth of the land, the great mobilisation machine—Gneisenau's patent, with improvements by von Moltke—was in full swing. How this machine does its work it is not easy to realise, unless one has actually watched its operation. To do this I halted for a few days, taking Cologne as head-quarters, and made daily excursions into the neighbouring country where the mobilisation machine was in operation. What I saw left me divided between admiration of its quiet regularity and its surprising efficiency; and a feeling of sadness which no man with any feeling could escape. While the Uhlan patrols and the Chasseurs-à-cheval are looking at each other across the frontier, a short description of the working of the mobilisation machine may not be uninteresting.

It is unnecessary to waste space in describing in de-

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tail the Prussian military system, now adopted by all the German States. If there are those among my readers who are not, by this time, familiar with these details, it may be taken as pretty certain that such would obdurately skip a paragraph furnishing them now. All that seems necessary is to point out that there are three strata of fighting men in Germany—the regular army, the "reserve," and the landwehr. It is a mistake into which many fall, and among others the *Times* in a leading article in the earlier days of the campaign, that the reserve is "in the rear of the regular army." This is not the case. The war strength of a regiment is just double its peace strength, and the increment consists of the reserve. The blending of the two in time of war is thorough and complete. The medalled men of 1866, and of the Sleswig-Holstein campaigns, called up from reserve, are welded into the same ranks with the young soldiers who are serving their first period of three years. Bayonet for bayonet, the old and the young soldiers balance each other, and the amalgamation is perfect between dash and steadiness—between whatever recklessness there may be in the bravery of youth, and the staid valour of maturer years. It is an utter mistake to think of the Prussian army or the Prussian reserves, as a militia similar to our highly estimable but rather weak-kneed "constitutional force." The British militiaman has, in very few instances, been a soldier otherwise than in the militia. He is quite a militia veteran, if he has gone through his month's drill once a year for four or five years, and he is not liable to serve abroad. The Prussian reserve man, in whatever stratum he may be, can point backward to three full years spent in active soldiering with the colours of his regiment. He has his drill every year, like our respected militiaman, but he is liable for foreign service,

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and that, too, even after he is out of the "reserve," and in the ranks of the landwehr.

The mobilisation machine grinds its grinding in this wise. The whole country is divided into districts, in the central city of each of which are the head-quarters of the army corps recruited from that district. Thence is sent forth the edict for mobilisation to the towns, the villages, and the quiet country parishes. The authorities there make out individual summonses, appointing day and place for the gathering, and these are left at the "respective places of abode" of the reserve men. Max has married, and children have begun to toddle around his modest table. He is in the midst of his harvest, and Gretchen is daily expected to add to the population of the Fatherland. Carl is to be married next week; he has bought his humble plenishing, and the priest or the minister has been spoken to. Hans is just entering into partnership; he has built new premises, and his presence may be essential to make the spoon—his absence will spoil the horn. Heinrich is on the eve of emigrating. His traps are bought, and his ticket is paid for. But the burgomaster's clerk, or the orderly corporal, comes round one pleasant summer evening, and serves on one and all a certain bit of paper. Max, when he reads it, growls "Donner wetter," and actually lets his pipe out in the dismal pause that follows its perusal. Carl walks off with it to his sweetheart, and there is a blubbering match. But when the appointed day arrives, Max and all the rest of them come to the front—genuine children of the Fatherland. Max leaves the harvest *in statu quo*, kisses his Gretchen, and wishes her well through her trouble, slobbers the bairns, and strides off to the muster—the wallet on his shoulder, into which Gretchen has crammed a couple of shirts, a lump of *schwarz brod*, a few slices

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of *schinken*, and a coil of fearfully and wonderfully made sausages—a little unaccustomed water in his eye, and a queer lump in his bare brown throat. Carl puts off his wedding indefinitely, and war becomes his mistress, *vice* the other *fräulein*, superseded for the time being. Heinrich postpones expatriation, perhaps to enrich the soil of France with certain phosphates, the product of the decomposition of bones. Hans leaves the new business and partner (an "exempt" let one hope) to take their course; he for the time has other fish to fry. The contingent of the village, duly called over and found complete, is sent off towards head-quarters. By the way it meets other contingents, till finally, as the rendezvous is reached, the several contingents make quite a procession in traversing the streets. Now, it can be recognised what a pure democracy, in a social sense, is the Prussian army. In the same file walk the labouring man and his master's son, the farmer's boy and the banker's clerk. And if you follow them till they have got their uniform, it is likely enough that you will find the labouring man, who already has his medals on his breast, wearing the gold stripes round his throat, and the petty centurion over his quondam superior, to whom he sayeth, "Do this," and he doeth it.

One is able also to recognise in this procession the genuine military experience of Prussia. Many of its members look louts—they drag their legs as if they had never been an hour at the goose step, and their shoulders are as round as if they had never learned the meaning of suppling motions. One of our smart sergeants of Charles Street would emphatically d——n the lot all round as "heart-breaks." But the heart-breaks have seen and done what, in all probability, the recruiting-sergeant has only a very faint conception of. They have seen

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and shared in the shock of battle—they are veterans. Two-thirds of the number wear the war-medals of former campaigns. Max was at the storming of the Dannewerk; Heinrich plied the needle-gun at Königsgrätz. Let us follow the party to the arsenal. On the road there is not a drunken man to be seen, and there is no need of carts or ambulances to carry the weary and footsore, for there are none such. "Falling out" is a trick that the Prussian reserve men do not seem to have learned. At the arsenal they get their uniforms, and on the peg whence each military suit is taken, is hung up the civilian raiment, there to await its owner on the return of peace. If the unclaimed personal flotsam and jetsam is a perquisite of King Wilhelm, the worthy old-clo' men of the Juden Strasse have had a fine harvest of it. For Gretchen may have been a widow before her baby was out of long clothes, and the priest may have never been called upon to marry Carl. The serving-out process is admirably systematic, betokening a state of active preparation highly creditable to the quartermaster's department. However, it takes the best part of a day ere the clodhopper of the morning is fully transformed into the soldier. And what a transformation is that effected by a spiked helmet, pair of breeches, and boots! The man is a different being now. The slouch has gone from his shoulders, his chest is thrown forward, his legs straightened, his chin "well off the stock" (in military phrase), his step brisk, and his carriage altogether soldierlike. The associations of the uniform have done it all. And now, as these newly remade soldiers crowd the streets, one can gauge their military physique with some precision. They are not trim, dapper men. The regimental tailor of a British crack regiment would have been in despair over the gaunt, long-thighed, big-jointed, thin-flanked fellows, all

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corners and muscle. But it is clear they are as tough as whip-cord, and strong, lasting, useful soldiers. Their sobriety and docility are simply astonishing. They go about the business of the hour as if they were working for their own hand; and now, in the evening, although the town is swarming with soldiers, it is as quiet as if there were not a man beyond the ordinary garrison. No piquets promenade the thoroughfares to pick drunken men out of the gutter, or to apprehend rioters; the barrack-gates are not infested by hordes of soldiers' women, and are not the theatres of scenes calculated to make decent people shun the vicinity. All is orderly, decent, and reputable.

We have an impression among us—and I confess I shared it—that he makes the best soldier who is the most of an *enfant perdu*. Cut your soldier off from all civil associations—no matter if from all associations of civilisation as well—make the army his trade, the barrack-room his home, and alternate the canteen with the low public-house as his chosen haunt. Let every douce civilian body wag his head in a half-kindly, half-chiding way over the soldier, regard him as more or less God-forgotten, yet still a fine fellow in his way, and capital food for powder. Let the soldier accept this view of himself, drink his pay, wax his moustache, wink at the girls, and swagger about the world in peace time—and in war? Of course your reckless scapegrace, without a tie in the world, who carries his life in his hand, is just the man to make a dashing charge, to cover himself with glory, to start the bells a-ringing and the park guns a-firing, and—to drink himself to death with the multitudinous pots which a temporarily proud and grateful civilian population press upon his acceptance.

Why? Wherefore should a man fight any better

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because he is a disreputable scapegrace? You talk of a stake in the country having a tendency to stimulate patriotism in civil life. Why should the same cause not have the same effect in military? Whether do the "tears fall and blind" the soldier most, when the band strikes up "The girl I leave behind me," if she be an honest woman, a true wife, and the mother of his children, or some dirty garrison trull hardly troubling to see him off in her anxiety to make the acquaintance of his successor? In most of the printsellers' windows in London is an engraving representing a farewell between an officer and his wife, as he quits for foreign service. I often appreciated the true sentiment of Millais' picture, yet never more so than during those early days when the mobilisation mill was grinding. The husband, leaning from a carriage window, stretches forth his hand, which the wife clasps in both of hers, gazing into his face in a speechless yearning agony of parting. I witnessed the scene, with variations, dozens of times in town and country Rhineland. Now it was a sun-burnt woman with tanned cheeks, and deeper tanned hands, grim, thin-cheeked, and angular-featured, who gripped the hand of a slightly greasy, equally brown man, in a blue slop, and boots suggestive of small boats. But the look out of the eyes was the same as in the picture; and the hussar officer had no fuller heart as the bell rang and the train started, than had the greasy *landmann* as he turned away with the broken muttered "Gott behüte Dich," and pulled his cap over his eyes for a spell before he re-lit his pipe. Did the *landmann* fight any the worse, think you, because he had left behind him in the village the sunburnt *frau* and their young ones, than would your dashing devil-may-care, who goes jauntily away to the war with a laugh and a jeer? I venture, for my part, to think not.

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After a run to Frankfort-on-the-Main in connection with the great "legitimation" question, I set my face at length, on the 24th July, towards the frontier. France was still unaccountably holding her hand, and every day Germany was breathing the freer, as the high-pressure mobilisation machine rapidly and efficiently overtook its work. Even pessimists dared to hope that the Turcos might not, after all, be quartered on them the day after but one; and the confidence was steadily gaining ground that the army to inaugurate invasion would consist not of Gauls but of Teutons. Men came to realise with flashing eyes and speech unwontedly excited, how the lean, silent man, in his bureau in Berlin, was fulfilling the engagement, which not a few thought an impossible boast unworthy of von Moltke.

The 24th of July was among the last of the days for ordinary traffic on the Rhine Valley Railways, till the hosts had done passing on their way to battle. Mayence was quite on a war footing. Bingerbruck—the terminus of the line which quits the Rhenish system and runs up the Nahe, towards Saarbrück, was totally blocked for civilian passengers and given over to the transport of troops and munitions of war. With a permission from General von Göben, commanding the 8th Army Corps, I found no difficulty in travelling by the military trains, and capital fun it was. I went up the Nahe in a long Noah's ark style of railway waggon, in one corner of which I found sitting room on my knapsack; and my fellow-passengers were thirty-nine men of one of the regiments of the Prussian Guard. Better fellows there could not be—all civil, jolly, and well bred. The sergeant of the squad was a medical student, who had temporarily given up learning how to cure, to betake himself to the practice of the art of killing, and several

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of his comrades were the sons of merchants. As the train jogged along at a very slow pace, for it had sixty carriages, and contained about two thousand men, the soldiers were vehemently cheered by the crowds collected at every station and every wayside village. Of course they cheered back again, the bugler or the drummer giving vent to his patriotic emotions on his instrument; while occasionally the spirit moved a grave young man—who looked as if he were doing chronic battle with a huge brazen serpent, but who was merely a trombonist or ophecleidist—to send a stave gurgling and throbbing through the many involutions of his fearful and wonderful instrument, that emerged at length from the big end in a deafening roar. We exchanged cigars. My soldier friends proffered me brown biscuits harder than the nether millstone, and seemed seriously hurt when I could not make an impression on them. Water-bottles, containing something that was not water, went the round; then came a song, something, of course, about the "Vaterland," and so we moved on merrily. Those water-bottles served out to the Prussian troops are very different to the horrible wooden tubs, with the inevitable leak, which British soldiers are condemned to carry, cursing them as they go. They are flat glass flasks, securely covered with stiff leather, and have a screw stopper. No fall will break them; they are cooler than wood, and they lie conveniently on the side opposite the sword. It was at Kreuznach where we had the earliest opportunity of recognising a fact with which all the world is now familiar, the extraordinary marching power of the German troops. A battalion marched in during the evening after a fifteen miles' tramp in heavy marching order, under an intensely hot sun, and the men wearing new boots. Powdered thick, as the sturdy square-built fellows were,

it was plain they were good, if need were, for another fifteen miles. I saw a battalion in complete marching order come into Bingen the night before. It had marched about ten miles, and was, of course, powdered white with dust. The pace at which the battalion passed could have been but little short of four miles an hour. The men marched four abreast, with considerable intervals between the files, so that the air circulated freely. But there was no straggling all over the road; a single word of command would have sufficed to bring the battalion into regularity of formation; and, notwithstanding the length of the march, and the rate at which the ground was covered, only one man had been compelled to fall out.

I suppose it is pretty well appreciated by this time everywhere, how much this remarkable power of the Germans to march long distances quickly, and that for consecutive days, helped to win for them their victories. Yet, without having personally witnessed their endurance displayed, often under unfavourable conditions, it is difficult for one to believe in the possibility of the accomplishment of perfectly well authenticated feats. I have known men march thirty English miles a day for three consecutive days. It must be remembered, too, that when the day's march was over the troops had to do their fire-lighting and cooking, and, indeed, had occasionally to go some distance for the food to cook. Nor must it be forgotten that the German troops on the march almost invariably bivouac in the open. They carry no tents—an excellent arrangement in fine summer weather, when it is a positive pleasure to sleep "under the beautiful stars," but one that is very trying when the weather is broken and inclement. They carry burdens on the march much heavier than the kit of our English soldiers, and in the burning dog-days they plodded

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sturdily forward all day long, yet I only heard of a few cases of sunstroke. I attribute this exemption to the comparative sobriety of the German soldiery. It was not long ago—nor is the case an isolated one—that a loud clamour was raised in England because a regiment had been marched some distance in the sun with the result of several sunstrokes, one of which was fatal. Those who cried shame over the trifling Kingston march should have seen the Germans striding steadily forward, the thermometer at eighty or eighty-five in the shade, with needle-gun, heavy knapsack, eighty rounds of ammunition, huge greatcoat, camp kettle, sword (a useless encumbrance), spade, water-bottle, haversack, and lots of odds and ends dangling about them, with perhaps a loaf, like a curling stone, under the arm, and without the remotest symptom of sunstroke. But then they had not been drunk with bad beer or worse spirits the night before, and it is this over-night intoxication to which, I think, inquiry would demonstrate that cases of sunstroke on the march are mostly attributable. So steady and unfluctuating are the marching pace and endurance of the German troops, that it must be a miscalculation on his own part if a leader is out in a reckoning having these conditions for its basis. The generals know what the men can do, and feel assured that they will do it; and this confidence enables them to devise strategical combinations in the full conviction, which is never falsified, that the troops will turn up at the appointed place true to time, and ready, too, for fighting, no matter how long and severe the road has been.

A day or two before our *Militär-zug* got to Kreuznach there had been a panic in that mildest of all German watering places, and the visitors had quitted hotels and lodging-houses with as much precipitation as if the town

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had been warned that the fate of Gomorrah was to overtake it next day. Princesses—German—thankfully accepted places—not seats—in coal waggons; and duchesses—German also—prayed to be allowed to squeeze into the goods vans. But I met one sturdy Briton who, although his wife and children were with him, valiantly refused to quit. He had lived three years and more among the Germans, and from his experience of them was thoroughly convinced that Kreuznach was not to be violated by a French foot; so he was living on here contentedly, with all the healing waters in the baths to himself.

The Kreuznach arrangements for the comfort of the troops *in transitu* may be taken as an example of that which was in force during this period at every considerable railway station in Germany. The magistrates and leading citizens had formed themselves into a committee, and they and other townsmen provided as much good bread and meat and as much wholesome Rhine wine as the soldiers could conveniently stow away. As each train came up, the wine, mixed with water, went round in pails, the solid viands on huge trays. When a regiment halted long enough, it was marched into a large shed and liberally regaled.

Our *Militär-zug* stuck fast at Kreuznach on the morning of the 25th July, and nobody in authority seemed to have the faintest idea when it or another train would proceed in the Saarbrück direction. When the evening came, and with it continued haziness on the part of the officials, I came to the resolution of walking to Kaiserslautern, a town on the Palatinate Railway, about midway between the Rhine at Speyer and Saarbrück, in the expectation of finding trains still running on the line between it and the latter place. Before I quitted Kreuznach

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three battalions of infantry and one regiment of cavalry had arrived by train, and commenced the march up the Nahe Valley by the road, taking billets for the first night, some in Kreuznach, others in the villages up the valley. The infantry battalions were composed of men of splendid physique, as became the "Queen's Guards;" the cavalry, which were dragoons, impressed me less favourably. It was surprising to find train after train discharging its contents at Kreuznach, instead of proceeding to a point much nearer the frontier; but the explanation indicated great sagacity. The infantry battalions comprised a large number of newly-mobilised men. A march was necessary to season these, and in fact the whole body, and to make the new boots fit easily and comfortably. A constant stream of troops was thus to continue pouring up the roads of the Nahe Valley; their concentration was easy at any given point: and, if need were, supports could have been expeditiously brought up the railway to unite with them. A very large army might in this way have been massed at any point on the slope of the Saar water-shed, looking towards France, or on or inside the frontier itself, with a punctuality and precision impossible were the railway only to be resorted to. It may be mentioned that while this Nahe Valley itself is rugged and precipitous in the extreme, its right and left banks—the former looking towards Mayence, the latter towards Coblentz—form rather broad plateaus of favourable configuration for the march of troops, although obstructed and narrowed in places by forests. The railway runs almost in the river bed, and between Kirn and St. Wendel bores no fewer than twelve tunnels through the rocks. Preparations were in progress for facilitating the blowing up of these tunnels, in case it should have become necessary to make the railway useless.

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All night long I trudged along the country roads in the direction of Kaiserslautern. After ten o'clock not a soul was to be seen, and I doubtfully held on the road, guided by the compass and by an occasional friendly finger-post. The road is fringed by frequent villages, but whether they were occupied by soldiers or not it was impossible to tell. As I progressed in the early morning, and presently approached Rockenhausen—a small town—rather more than half-way to Kaiserslautern—I found the country being gradually more and more densely billeted. At Rockenhausen my pedestrian powers gave out, and I had to drive for the remainder of the journey, the troops becoming more plentiful as I proceeded, till at Kaiserslautern it seemed as if I had reached the headquarters of a considerable army. There I found the railway, and a train which conveyed me first to Neunkirchen, where the Nahe Railway was rejoined, and thence down into Saarbrück. At Neunkirchen first became visible the earnest of actual warfare, in the shape of the well-known white flag with the red cross floating over occasional buildings along the line; but not a single soldier, far less an enemy, was to be seen. The children played merrily in the smiling villages as if the millennium had arrived; the smoke poured from the chimneys of the factories, and from the pit-heads on the grimy embankments the output of coal and iron was progressing as if France and Germany had sworn indissoluble brotherhood. When we reached Saarbrück we found the station crowded with nonchalant civilians, male and female. The streets wore the most everyday aspect; the shops were open, the working folks were strolling in from the townlands, and the young ladies daintily promenaded, exciting a flutter among the trim subalterns. A sentry on the door of the hotel inhabited by the military command-

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ant, a little piquet of Uhlan lancers in a corner of the market-place, and the eloquent white flags constituted the few tokens of war visible.

Although the early operations of which Saarbrück formed the centre have been snuffed out by the stupendous fighting to which they were merely the overture, yet they ought not to be without some little interest, if the analogy be followed that people are found listening to the overture without impatience. This summer doubtless, the quiet frontier town will be swarming with visitors, and with such the use of their eyes will supersede topographical description. But *non contigit cuique adire Corinthum*—everybody will not go to Saarbrück, and a few lines about the localities will scarcely be greatly out of place. The railway line traversing Saarbrück, crossing the frontier beyond it at right angles, and stretching away to Forbach, and thence to Metz and the heart of France, emerges in a south-westerly direction, out of a range of wooded knolls that bound the Saarbrück plain on the north-east. These knolls, becoming quite a chain farther to the south, have as their backbone the Bavarian frontier, which runs almost parallel with the Saar Valley nearly as far as Saarguemines, about ten miles to the south-east of Saarbrück, at the point at which converge the Prussian, Bavarian, and French frontiers. In the centre of the valley into which the railway line runs down from these heights stands Saarbrück, a well-built, clean, and business-like town, penetrated by the river Saar, which is crossed by three bridges, of which one is the railway bridge. The portion of the town north of the Saar is called St. Johann, that to the south is Saarbrück proper. Each of the bridges connecting these two had its thoroughfare, at the time of which I write, partially obstructed by casks filled with stones, while other casks

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stood in readiness to block the remainder of the passage. Traversing Saarbrück, the Forbach road encounters westward a very abrupt rise, up which it winds with twists and cuttings, and finally has a somewhat deep cutting through the crest and crown of the ridge. The ground on the face of this slope is very much broken, and, with the town and the bridge at its foot, is calculated materially to dismember an army that might be forced backward off the plateau of which it forms the margin towards Saarbrück. Emerging on this plateau, we find it falling with a very gradual slope down into a valley that lies parallel to the ridge, bounded on the further side, both to the right and left, by densely-wooded rising ground. From the centre of this valley there runs up at right angles another valley, in the throat of which, and directly opposite the centre of the ridge above Saarbrück, lies the French town of Forbach, at a distance of five miles. This valley is bounded on its left, as one looks from Saarbrück, by an abruptly-rising series of heights, crowned with a table-land. Those heights project boldly into the first-named valley, almost in the form of a natural bastion, gliding gradually away further on the left into the lower wooded slopes. These heights, with their bluff bastion-like termination, form the famous "Spicheren-Berg." Across the débouchement of the transverse valley into the parellel valley runs the imaginary frontier line; traversing on one side the wooded rising grounds at Schönecken, on the other the Spicheren-Berg, crossing the railway, and going first north-west and then due west to the right, while on the left it trends away in a south-easterly direction till it strikes the Saar, which continues the boundary till the projecting frontier point near Saarguemines.

All along this imaginary line, the hostile piquets and

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videttes confronted each other. As one stood on the Forbach road, looking up the transverse valley toward Forbach, he saw below him a Prussian piquet of Uhlans and infantry, and on the little knolls in advance, the videttes circling singly, their lance-pennons fluttering in the wind. Several hundred yards further away, by the side of the Forbach road, was a big block-house, which served the French as a piquet-house. Outside this the Frenchmen were to be seen sitting or lounging about in considerable numbers. In their front was the chain of their videttes. All along the frontier line to the right and left of this point, there ran this arrangement of videttes and piquets. The French Chasseurs had a camp of about fifty tents some distance to the right of the Forbach road, and occupied the wood behind it, seemingly in some force. Towards Saarguemines, French and Prussian soldiers confronted each other in larger bodies; but in this important part of the frontier, where Prussia and Bavaria are, as it were, projected some distance into France, they kept at a rather more respectful distance from each other. In those pleasant early days, while as yet there were no graves on the Spicheren-Berg, and no shattered men lying in the Lazarettes, or littering the platform of the railway station in the blood-stained stretchers, the piquets and videttes formed quite the diversion of the Saarbrück people. After work was over, the labouring people used regularly to take a stroll up the heights, to watch the dropping fire, which was lazily maintained, fain to see a German marksman prove his skill by hitting a Frenchman. Both sides were very cautious, and few casualties took place. As yet the Saarbrück hospital contained but two wounded Germans, both linesmen of the Hohenzollern regiment. The French were reputed to be in force at Forbach, as many as 15,000 men. Saarbrück

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was, however, in no trepidation, and kept a good face up with its little garrison of one battalion of the 40th infantry (the Hohenzollern regiment) and the 7th (or Rhineland) Uhlan regiment. Now and then a German and a Frenchman appeared to lose their temper, and blazed away at each other as fast as they could load. As regards aim, there was nothing to boast of on either side.

A plucky little cavalry expedition, which had the crowning merit of being successful, occurred opportunely enough to furnish the Saarbrückians with fresh gossip-matter, and the little garrison with encouragement. About the 20th July, a detachment of thirty Rhineland Uhlans left Saarbrück, under the command of Lieutenant von Voight, charged with the duty of destroying a viaduct on the railway line which connects Metz with Saarguemines, Bitche, Hagenau, and Strassburg. A single glance at the map will show the reader the great use of this line to the French. Branching off from the Forbach-Metz railway, near Cocheren, a little place a few miles inside the frontier, it skirts the frontier throughout its whole length, and admitted of the speedy transport of supports all along it. To interrupt the communication thus afforded, was manifestly of immense importance to the Germans, and the point selected was a viaduct of considerable height, a little on the Saarguemines side of Bitche. The little band proceeded first inland to Neunkirchen, where the services were enlisted of a body of miners from the iron-works and collieries there, men experienced in the conducting of blasting operations, and ready to face danger for the sake of Germany. Those were mounted on led horses, and the detachment proceeded to Zweibrücken, whence the frontier was reached at a point almost due south. It was found that the French were on the frontier line in considerable force, sufficient to frustrate efforts

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made to get at the bridge on two successive nights. To cut the line of outposts would have been easy, but the aim was not to do so, but to blow up the viaduct, and to effect this it became obvious that a flank movement of rapidity would have to be executed. A few riding-lessons were given to the mining engineers, to enable them to sit the troop horses at a gallop; and then, on the night between the 24th and 25th, the frontier was crossed, without molestation, at a secluded point to the right of where the French were on the outlook. A gallop of about seven miles brought the party to the bridge. The engineers went to work at once, the Uhlans covering the working party on both sides. In a very short time the viaduct blew up with a grand explosion, and the French, then for the first time becoming aware of how they had been circumvented, hurried from the frontier inland to the spot. The Uhlans kept them at bay till the artificers had completed the work of destruction. A large quantity of material, both warlike and commercial, was destroyed, the engineers remounted, and the party galloped back, reaching German soil without a single casualty. The Uhlans met with an enthusiastic reception, when they rode back into Saarbrück after their little exploit.

As yet the evil days were not, and it was not easy to realise the wrath to come, as one sat by the table d'hôte, in the sunshiny Rheinischer Hof, clinking glasses with those right pleasant comrades, the officers of the Hohenzollern battalion. Over the good Rhine wine, the projected undertakings of the patrols were freely discussed, and there existed for a few of us a standing eligibility for the reception of stray French bullets, in return for the trifling inconvenience of getting up in the small hours, and accompanying the patrol of the morning. The narrative of one of those expeditions—it was made, if my

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notes are correct, on the 28th of July—will suffice as a sample. In the grey dawn, a small party of the 40th, consisting of twelve men and two under-officers, started from the barracks, to reconnoitre the frontier line; and this party I accompanied. It was about four in the morning that we reached the top of the rising ground outside Saarbrück, of which I have had occasion to speak so often. Everything seemed quiet in the valley below, and we went onward to the right front, in the direction of a little house that is very close to the frontier line. We found it unoccupied, save by an old woman, who dwelt in it contentedly while the bullets were hourly whistling over her roof. She told us with a yawn that all was quiet, and we went forward again, inclining to the right to gain the cover of the edge of a wood that occupies a rising ground, over the summit of which goes the frontier line. Skirting this wood for some distance, we had crossed the frontier, and were in French territory, still without seeing anything in the shape of French troops. Suddenly there came a piff-paff of smoke from behind a tree, a little way up the knoll, less than one hundred yards to our right. There was but one shot, but the cover was so dense that, for all we could tell, the wood might be alive with Frenchmen; so we discreetly slanted away to the left, crossing an interval of open ground near the railway line, and then striking into a wood which occupies an isolated knoll that rises out of the valley. The trees in this wood are much less close than in the other, and we thought that if any Frenchmen were in it, we could hardly fail to see them. The aim of the reconnoitring party was to get to its left edge, as far forward as possible, so as to be parallel with the French vidette, and to have the opportunity of investigating, at as short distance as possible, the dispositions of the French in

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the neighbourhood of their piquet-house on the Forbach road. We had got about half through the wood when we heard a wild screech directly in our rear, and between us and home. Turning round I saw about twenty red-breeched French soldiers dancing about excitedly, and alternating gesticulations with the discharge of their rifles. They were within a short eighty yards of us, and, if they could have shot straight, had as easy a mark as might be. They had to all appearance been lining the edge of the wood where it fronted Saarbrück, and we had unwittingly turned their flank. If they could only have kept down their excitement, and held their tongues, they might literally have stalked us from behind, for we had not the remotest suspicion that there was anything in our rear, and the party was concentrating its attention on its front. The coolness of the under-officer who commanded the little party was inimitable. He was smoking his morning pipe, and never troubled to take it out of his mouth. He grunted an order or two, which brought us out of the wood on to the plain on its left, across which we struck steadily, slanting inward toward our outpost on the Forbach road. The Frenchmen continued to fire after us for some time, and managed to hit one of the men on his pouch. Had the shot taken effect, it would have penetrated the wrong way for honour, but the ball was a spent one. We ultimately got back to breakfast all right, the under-officer's pipe still in full blast.

On the same day, when the one o'clock *table d'hôte* was in progress, a report was brought in that the French were moving cannon over the brow of the Spicheren-Berg, on to a little table-land about half-way down the slope. Of this little plateau they were very fond, having continually their sharpshooters posted all round it. On the previous evening, a French general had reconnoitred

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from it the German slope of the valley, and, as reported by a countryman, had put a number of questions to the rustics, as to the position of Saarbrück, and the strength of the force occupying it. Immediately the drummers paraded the town, beating to arms. A company of the Hohenzollerns occupied each of the bridges, the cavalry sent a detachment on to the height, while the rest remained standing to their horses in the Central Platz, and a third company of the Hohenzollerns marched up the hill, and took up a position of watchfulness just behind its crest. On the summit, besides the Uhlans, there was a considerable collection of civilians, eagerly watching the disposition of the cannon on the plateau. Crowds ever have a tendency to draw fire, so I gave this one a wide berth, and sat down some distance aside, on a spot whence a view of the whole front was commanded. There were six field-pieces in all, which seemed to be drawn by infantry men into position. What the object was did not seem very apparent. It might be, I thought, that under the diversion of a cannonade on the left, an attempt might be made to steal round on the right, and get into Saarbrück by a *coup de main*, or, again, to ascertain the range might have been all that was intended.

Presently there came a thunder plump, which sent the civilians crowding inside a little beer-house called "The Belle Vue," that stands on the brow of the hill, just off the road. Almost immediately I saw a puff of smoke come from the mouth of one of the cannon, and a shell struck on the road close by the beer-house, bursting as it fell. There was a stampede on the part of the civilians out of the beer-house, and they scuttled vigorously under cover over the hill. They were only just in time. Indeed the house was by no means empty when another

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shell, ricocheting off the road, struck its front, went through the wall as if it had been paper, and burst inside, blowing out the windows and part of the roof. Another followed, also striking the front, but it did not burst. Three more shots were fired, one of which wrecked an outhouse behind the beer-house, and then the French gave over firing, and withdrew their cannon from the plateau backwards out of sight. When the artillery had been withdrawn I entered the beer-house, which already had been re-occupied by its inhabitants. The women-folk stood weeping and bewailing the mischief. A more complete wreck, indeed, I never saw. Two rooms had been blown into one, the bar knocked into little pieces, the table, at which I had drunk a glass of seltzer-water a couple of hours before, split up into tinder, and a great gap torn in the floor, exposing the cellarage, where there had evidently been a smash royal among the bottles. The French practice was by no means bad. Three shots out of six struck the house. It was shut up, and there was no more cool seltzer-water after a hot walk on the hill.

The incident of the afternoon stimulated the videttes with unwonted alertness, and they blazed away at each other till it was nearly quite dark. One of the last shots fired killed an Uhlan who was making the patrol. The poor fellow was hit full on the forehead, and must have died instantaneously. I was on the height when the infantry men carried in the corpse on a stretcher improvised of their guns. The drops of blood pit-patted on the road as they carried him past me, his cloak thrown over his limbs. But his face was bare, and I knew the man at once. I had given him a cigar in the afternoon as I met him on the Forbach road going out on vidette. Quite a lad he was, with the down hardly

grown on his cheek, and likely enough a mother might have been thinking of him to-night, little knowing that he was lying stark and cold, waiting for a grave.

In the sunshiny bloodless days of the end of July, spy-hunting was another great diversion to idle men. Not that the German patrols thought or looked upon it by any means in the light of an amusement; on the contrary, they regarded it as a very serious and responsible occupation indeed, and, not having as yet got the gauge of the French *fainéance* in this important department of military operations, gave open ear to all the stories about suspicious persons having been seen which were retailed to them by wiseacres. On the forenoon of the 30th of July I witnessed with great amusement one of these expeditions. To a sergeant in command of a detachment came a young civilian in a light coat, who had seen a person, looking very like a Frenchman, prowling about away to the right of the German advanced centre. Sergeant, on receiving the information, solemnly draws his sword, and then betakes himself to consideration. Having finished his cogitation, he takes his pipe out of his mouth and orders out a party of four Fusiliers. The squad start at a brisk walk, headed by the sergeant, who brings his sword down to the "right engage" as he proceeds. Getting excited, he begins to run, and his men run after him. The civilian in the white coat accompanies the sergeant. An eminence is reached commanding rather an extensive view. Nobody is to be seen. Sergeant turns on to civilian resentfully, reproaches him for being the communicant of a canard, sheathes his sword, re-lights his pipe, and commences a return with his party at his heels. The civilian, whose *amour propre* is wounded, suddenly detects a crouching individual in the foreground, and there is triumph in the

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tone in which he calls the sergeant back. Sergeant wheels about, pouches his pipe, draws his sword, and then looks in the direction indicated. Having marked his prey, he with his party starts off at top speed down the hill, and captures the crouching individual, who finds himself between a file of men, with the sergeant's sword in the immediate foreground, before he can collect his senses. When he has accomplished this, crouching individual explains with some indignation—its vent impeded by the necessity for keeping his pipe alight—that he has been specially commissioned by the German Commandant to watch the French, and, if possible, to get among them. The sergeant, in fact, has apprehended his own spy. Sergeant seems inclined to look foolish, and of course gets angry at the civilian again. Civilian, however, is prepared to vindicate himself. He has seen another "suspicious" close to the edge of the wood to the left, and the sergeant, mitigating his choler, makes off for this supposed spy No. 2. I should have mentioned that a little procession of loafers has from the first dogged the heels of the party, and that suggestions are freely tendered by everybody at once, including the small boys. When spy No. 2 is reached he is found to be a sheepish-looking rustic in a ragged blue blouse, who is sitting on the dyke-side with a female, presumably his sweetheart. The account he gives of himself is not considered satisfactory—indeed he can give no coherent account at all, the proximity of the sergeant's sword having apparently addled him. Accordingly he is made a prisoner in due form. The Fusiliers fix their sword-bayonets and take position on either side of him. The sergeant, with his sword still at the "right engage," marches bravely in the van; the civilian looks as if he had saved the Fatherland; the small boys whisperingly

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compare notes as to the personal appearance of the "spy," who they seem to consider deserves to be shot on the spot. And so the procession takes its way to the Commandant's quarters, where it probably turns out that the "spy" is no spy at all, but a bumpkin German to the soles of his huge brogues.

Sunday, the 31st of July, was a day of fast, humiliation, and prayer for the success of the German arms, appointed by an edict of King Wilhelm. It was kept devoutly. Men in Saarbrück went to church this day who had not darkened the church door for years. The garrison, as well as a great proportion of the townsfolk, attended the great church in the Central Platz, whither I also turned in with the rest. The piled arms, with the bayonets fixed, that flanked the principal entrance, spoke of war time. The Covenanters worshipped their God with their weapons in hand—

"The lyart veteran leaning on his spear."

The German soldiers left their arms outside the church, but ready to be grasped and used at a moment's notice. The preliminary music was emblematic. It began with a low wail of pain and sorrow. The nation confessed its many sins, and bemoaned its unworthiness of the favour of God. Then broke out sharp and shrill the urgent call to arms. Then followed a bicker and clash as of two mighty hosts joining the battle one with the other. After the loud din of the fray there pealed forth the joyous notes of triumph—victory had been won, and the appropriate finale was the ever-noble *Te Deum*. Then arose the preacher, an old man with a worn ascetic face, snow-white hair, eyes that sparkled like live coals under excitement, and a voice that pealed like a trumpet to the uttermost corner of the great church, and thrilled

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the auditor with its indescribable vibration. His discourse was the music done into words. After telling the people in sternly plain language that they were wicked enough to have forfeited the Divine favour, he implored them to merit it by humiliation, repentance, and faith. Then, raising his voice, he spoke of the goodness of Germany's cause,—how that she courted not war, but for her honour's sake accepted it when forced upon her. The colour came into the withered cheek, and the right arm swayed above the head as if it grasped a sword, as the old man fervently enjoined the duty of patriotism and invoked the blessing of Heaven on the arms of Germany. The most casual observer could notice the thrilling effect on the audience. It would scarcely have been surprising had a cheer broken out from the people who hung on the preacher's words.

Not a dozen miles from this Saarbrück church a very different scene was meanwhile being enacted. A detachment of forty infantry men, part of the garrison of Saarlouis, was patrolling the frontier between Geisweiler and Ludweiler, when, about half-past eleven in the forenoon, they came suddenly on a body of French, consisting of three companies of infantry. These were invaders, for the soil was German; and, notwithstanding the discrepancy of numbers, the children of the Fatherland steadily advanced to the encounter. The hostile bodies were already exchanging shots when a squadron of French Chasseurs suddenly dashed into the arena, and, with loud cheers, charged over the broken ground towards the Germans. These waited till the horsemen, disorganised by the nature of the ground, had come within point-blank range, and then gave fire in a volley. French saddles were emptied, and the Chasseurs whirled hurriedly away to the left. The Germans, encouraged by this triumph, pressed forward to meet the French in-

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fantry. Several volleys were exchanged, the Germans still pushing on, till at length the Frenchmen withdrew in a rout, throwing off their knapsacks as they ran to lighten their flight. On the field lay dead eight French soldiers and one officer. The Germans sustained inconsiderable damage. Two were severely wounded and several slightly.

The ex-Emperor Napoleon has placed upon record his piteous testimony to the skill with which the German Commander-in-Chief masked his dispositions till the hour came for the veil to be drawn aside with a result so disastrous for the French arms. If there was bewilderment and ignorance on the French side of the frontier, there was scarcely less puzzlement for those who were on the German side of the hedge. The secret was so well kept that not a glimmer of it had dawned on Saarbrück on the last day of July. When the war was declared the garrison of Saarbrück consisted of a battalion of infantry and a regiment of Uhlans. A fortnight had passed, and the reinforcements might have been reckoned by the half-dozen. It was known that Frossard, with a whole army corps, was looking across at Saarbrück over the ridges of the Spicheren, and nobody had the means of knowing what everybody knows now, the reason, so discreditable to French organization, which prevented him from blowing out of his path the sparse picquets and patrols, and invading the territory which had its frontier only nominally guarded. Men asked each other if it were possible that the Frenchmen did not know the weakness of the land. The infantrymen and the Uhlans were manipulated dexterously and assiduously to make it seem that a battalion was a brigade, and a few hundred horsemen a powerful cavalry force; yet it was felt universally that the place was held only by dint of sheer

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impudence—for there were no supports of importance as yet nigh at hand—and that the bubble must burst summarily if Frossard should fling aside his unaccountable inactivity. With long faces and boding hearts the townspeople, striving still to wear an aspect of confidence, muttered amongst themselves, "How long, how long?" Students of military topography, men who read Lavallée and pored over their maps, failed not to arrive at the conviction that somewhere between the Moselle and the Vosges lay an eligible tract for an invasion of France. The French frontier here, as it stood before the recent annexations, was unnatural in a physical sense; and therefore it was weak. The prominent natural features—the rivers and hills—ran transversely to the boundary line, and the valleys accordingly afforded so many natural roads whereby the country might be penetrated. Were the hills which separate these straths rough and prominent, the difficulty of penetration would have been greatly increased from the danger that presented to an invading army of being taken in flank; but hardly anywhere is such their characteristic, and the low hills and insignificant heights may be swept by an army advancing up one of the shallow valleys. This configuration, in combination with the artificial frontier line, leaving, as it were, so many open portals inviting to the entrance of France, Vauban, the great French engineer, had devoted his energies to the erection of artificial guardians over the frontier naturally so open. On the Moselle he fortified Metz and Thionville. The Vosges bulwark is strengthened by Bitche and Phalsburg; but there lies a wide plain between the Vosges and the Moselle, with nothing in the shape of natural or artificial defence. Vauban had fortified Saarlouis, but in 1815 the Allies deprived the French of Saarlouis, which was

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now in the possession of a German garrison, and instead of being a protection to the French frontier was a thorn in its side. The result seemed to be that a German army could advance, plunge into France, elude Metz by way of Nancy, and reach the basin of the Marne without encountering any other obstacle than Toul. Once in the Marne basin, the road to Paris was open.

But there were no signs of a German army on the frontier, and every day, it was argued, must be adding to the strength of the French army now standing stockade-wise across the track. But surely the province of a defensive stockade was one hardly in accordance with the precedents or idiosyncrasies of the armies of France. Why the men in red breeches lay so long basking in the sun on the slopes of Spicheren we could not comprehend, but the day must surely be near now, we said one unto the other, when they would gird up their loins and roll their columns on over the Exercise Platz and across the Saar into the Köllerthaler Wald or the Pfalz. And in their path stood but an open town, a couple of bridges half barricaded with barrels, a battalion of infantry, and a regiment of Uhlans.

The 1st of August, while the French were yet supine, brought to Saarbrück what all hoped was the earnest of a host, not alone of resistance, but invasion. On the afternoon of that day the third battalion of the 40th, two companies of its first battalion, and two batteries of artillery, reached the vicinity and made their bivouac on a flat upland in front of a wood. They had left Trèves a fortnight before, and marched down by what seemed strangely easy stages. As soon as the news of their arrival reached Saarbrück, I went out to the encampment with some friends, carrying boxes of cigars, which form

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an excellent introduction to German troops everywhere. The first bivouac we saw, it naturally interested us greatly, and the reader may care to read of it as a type of the system. It was a very pretty sight. On the left were the artillery, the guns regularly parked, with the ammunition-waggons in their rear, and in front of each line so formed the picquet ropes, with the horses fastened to them, and the harness deposited on the ground behind them. The forge was alight, and the farriers busy shoeing horses, while the armourer had also his fire alight, and was tinkering some small arms. Further on the right was the battalion of infantry, or rather the two half-battalions, each of two companies. The Germans always bisect their battalions in this way, both in camp and in action—a little interval constituted the separation. In the fore-front lay or sat the officers, enjoying their Rhine wine. In their rear, in the centre, was the battalion colour in its cover, and stuck deep in the ground, with the drum-major's halberd alongside of it, and the drums and instruments of the band lying all around it. Then came a straight row of knapsacks, each surrounded by the rolled great-coat, just as the front rank had deposited them. About ten paces to the rear was another similar row, and in the interval stood the stacks of piled needle-guns. This formation existed mathematically right away to the rear. The men were dispersed in various directions, but none strayed to a great distance, the limit being marked by a cordon of sentries. There was a crowd round a beer cart, another round a wine cart. There was soon a crowd round us as we produced the cigars we carried. On a knoll sat a band of singers chanting a song of Fatherland. A squad, whose bivouac lay in an orchard, engaged themselves in shaking the trees and eating the fruit as it fell. Others, again, amused themselves by gymnastic

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exercises, running races, or jumping against each other. Evidently they were as fresh as if they had not marched a mile; yet they had been on the road fourteen days, and had never had their clothes off, lying in the bivouac night after night. In the rear, close to the wood, the pioneers had dug trenches and gathered wood. The fires were alight, and slung on poles extending from bank to bank were the simmering camp-kettles, evolving a very savoury odour. What were their contents was not difficult to guess. In the ditch by the woodside lay some yet warm bullock hides. The animals had been slaughtered, cut up, and the pieces were in the pot, all within a couple of hours of the halt. Meanwhile, the men stayed the edge of their appetite with the black bread and the beer, of which latter there was a plentiful supply. The dusk gradually began to gather. The kettles were taken off the fires, and their contents distributed. The men ate and were filled, and then gathered round the fires to sing and to gossip. The good people of Saarbrück had come up among their countrymen in some numbers, and great was the fraternisation. In the foreground, by little camp-tables, which had sprung up as if by magic, the officers sat clinking their glasses of Rhine-wine and smoking placidly, as they listened to the band which played for half an hour before the watch-setting at nine o'clock. Then the "lie down" sounded, and the men, unrolling their cloaks, gave themselves a shake, put their heads upon their knapsacks, and in less than a quarter of an hour there arose a sound of conscientious snoring, to which a marsh full of frogs was not fit to hold a candle. The officers sat later by lantern light; but they, too, one by one quitted the social circle, and stretched themselves on their cloaks on the ground. By-and-by there were left, tarrying over the wine cup, only a burly

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senior captain, the jovial adjutant, and a silent lieutenant, the last of whom I had at intervals suspected of being asleep, but who always livened up to fill his glass as the bottle passed him. Then they, too, "turned in," if the phrase is allowable, when everything was outside, and, excepting the chain of sentries and the quarter guard, the whole camp was wrapped in the deepest slumber.

At three punctually the bugler of the night sounded the reveille, and the camp awoke and rubbed its eyes, with many yawns. Cloaks were rolled, and the fragrance of the morning pipe scented the cool clear air. The cooks stirred the unextinguished embers of the fires and piled on the billets. The camp-kettles were again strung on the cross-poles, this time filled with coffee, and in about three-quarters of an hour from the reveille some 1,500 men were masticating the black bread and drinking the black, milkless coffee out of their mess-tins. Then the band played again, and the men got under arms and answered to the roll-call. This done they were ready for the road, the hour being half-past four A.M. Had there been a march they would have journeyed till about eight or nine, taken a rest during the heat of the day, and probably have done a few miles more in the cool of the evening. But no marching was in orders for the day, and so the arms were piled again, and the men were free to do as they liked, always keeping within the limits indicated by the sentries. Many went to sleep again, others betook themselves to tailoring jobs with as much aptitude as if they were genuine sons of the goose, and occasionally with a little disregard to the critical niceties of decorum in the way of costume. Others did nothing but smoke in all the luxurious *dolce far niente* of perfect idleness. Ten minutes would have sufficed to see the camp struck and the troops on their march. It

was impossible to conceive men in better heart; officers and men alike self-reliant, buoyant, and ready for anything, in the fullest conviction that they could not be beaten.

This Trèves contingent brought in three spies—rather a curious assortment. One was a French officer; the other a clergyman, or at all events a person who wore the dress of one; the third, outwardly and visibly, was a woman. For a couple of days she had dogged the Hohenzollerns, who, with all chivalry, had refrained from prying very closely into her business; but one morning a sergeant, of a matter-of-fact turn of mind, interviewed the lady, and the result was the discovery—I fear I perpetrate a bull—that she was a man. The make-up was of a character to do some credit to the sergeant's power of observation.

CHAPTER II.

Saarbrück and Spicheren.

On the morning of the 2nd of August, when the Hohenzollerns were lounging in their sunshiny bivouac, the French Emperor, with his boy, was travelling by train from Metz to Forbach. The German videttes down in the valley heard the gusts of cheering with which Frossard's soldiers welcomed the Head of the State and his heir. Ignorant of the cause, some put the cheering down as a response to the announcement of a French success somewhere; others ascribed it to an extra issue of beer. How could the honest Uhlans discern that the father had come to the frontier to make a military promenade to tickle wherewithal the Parisians, and that "Lulu," as they irreverently called the heir to the imperial diadem, was with his father that he might obtain his baptism of fire?

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The night had passed in extreme quiet all along the frontier, and in the morning it seemed as if the 2nd was to be as monotonous as had been the 1st. General von Klepsal and another brigadier went on reconnoitring expeditions, and came back again to a placid breakfast. A couple of guns with their detachments, part of the batteries that had arrived the previous night, went up the Saar to St. Arnual, and finding nothing threatening there, the officer brought them back. Two more, on their return, went out in the same direction, their functions appearing purely those of patrol. Two guns were leisurely got up on the height above the town at the Bellevue, and there remained. The soldiers in the barrack-yards, and in the several posts around the environs of the town, slept and smoked and gossiped, their arms stacked as usual; the officers sat under the trees drinking their Rhine wine, and the whole place seemed oppressed by the drowsy effect of a fervently hot day.

A little after ten, having crossed over the Saarbrück valley from the night's bivouac, I leisurely climbed the slope of the Bellevue height. There was no bustle on the road, and I saw nothing out of the common on our side as I reached the Exercise Platz at the top. But across the valley on the French side there was a sight to see. I use the terms "right" and "left" with reference to my position, looking across at the French, whether in speaking of their attack or of the German defence. On the left, then, of the bastion-like plateau, already mentioned more than once, there runs tortuously a fine road leading up out of the valley intervening between the German and the French frontier positions. It conducts over the brow of the hill, skirting the right of a wood, and behind this wood and hill it had long been known that the French were located in force. Near the top this

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road throws out two branch roads, which both also lead down into the valley. One is a rough country road that skirts the right edge of the plateau; the other is a mere green track, of, however, some breadth, which crests the plateau, and tumbles off its edge down the abrupt poplar-clad slope that parts the upland from the valley.

Down all these three roads were streaming dense and glittering currents of French troops; the stream on the great road flowing swiftest and farthest. The sun struck on the bright bayonets, and threw out from the grey and green background the scarlet-legged infantry-men. Those came on in the true careless irregular French style, about six abreast, with hardly a pretence at formation, but with a speed that was remarkable. The moment that the head of the column touched the valley it broke like spray. As file after file reached a certain point it became dissipated; the men composing it extended at a run farther and farther, till by the time that the heads of all three columns were in the valley, an unbroken line of skirmishers was drawn several hundred yards to the front. Then began the steady deployment of company after company, battalion after battalion; and almost before one had realised the position, a long dense line had been ruled along the bottom of the valley behind the fainter line of the skirmishers. Squadrons of cavalry streamed down, and, forming line at a gallop, rapidly overtook the infantry. Passing through the intervals, they re-formed and pushed on to occupy and cover the flanks of the advance.

While this was going on in the valley the stream from behind the wood and the hill seemed to flow from a source that never would run dry. It was hardly a gap that was caused in it by the two batteries of field artillery that came down and wheeled off the road on to the verge

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of the plateau, the gunners unlimbering and standing ready by the venomous pieces that looked across at us with their wicked black mouths. Higher up on the crest there was visible another field battery, apparently of larger guns. In all, before I had to quit the heights, I am satisfied that from 6,000 to 7,000 French troops were in sight. The peculiarity of the movements I have just described was their perfect quietness and uninterruption. The French tirailleurs were already breasting the slope that led up to the positions held by the Germans; their main advance was more than half across the valley, and yet not a Chassepot gave tongue. The range must have been within 300 yards, and still the Frenchmen pressed on with lissom agility, but without a single shot. On the German side there existed as profound quietness; either side seemed reluctant to begin the ball.

The German position demands a short explanation to aid in the comprehension of what took place. The height known indifferently as the Bellevue Height and the Exercise Platz is a natural rampart thrown up between Saarbrück and the frontier. It is depressed a little to the left of its centre, and the southern eminence is in its turn slightly cleft, the *coll* to the right being surmounted by a pleasure-garden and serrated with terraces. The lumpy hill on the left slopes more gently on the French side than on the German, and extends eastward so as to form a cover to the village of St. Arnual, lying about three miles nearer Saarguemines than Saarbrück. This height, or rather these series of heights, present tempting opportunities for taking up a strong defensive position. But they have two fatal defects. The frontier valley circumvents them both to the right near Schönecken and to the left a little beyond St. Arnual. Thus from either hand the heights may be

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turned, the valley of the Saar penetrated, and Saarbrück taken. Of this formation the French were evidently aware. They presently began to echelon their advance, and to bring up their left shoulders as if they meant sweeping round the height to the left, and pouring into the Saar valley *viâ* St. Arnual. And it seemed as if the German disposition had anticipated this intention. The German force was indeed so weak that it was hopeless to attempt keeping the whole line; and, so far as it had been made available at all, the concentrations tended towards the defence of the St. Arnual gap. On the heights, then, when and for some time after the French made their appearance in the valley, there was hardly anything but the ordinary outposts and supporting detachments. I question, indeed, if there came any reinforcements at all on to the berg. What force there was extended itself in a thin line along the crest, taking advantage of a scooped-out road that traversed that direction. It was policy on its part to delay firing as long as possible, since the paucity of its fire would betray its weakness. And it was evident that the French did not half like the berg, with what secrets there might be concealed behind it, but inclined rather to the St. Arnual direction, although cautious not to offer their flank towards the berg.

But the long silence of the Germans appeared to give rise to the impression on the part of the French that after all there could be nothing formidable in that position, since opportunities so tempting were not taken advantage of. So with one impulse the French echelons brought forward their right shoulders, re-formed a continuous line, and confronted now the swell of the height directly in front of Saarbrück. Their tirailleurs opened a spattering fire, and then the Germans replied. This

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was the moment of the bursting of our little Saarbrück bubble. The French opened fire all along their line, sweeping the height with a storm of Chassepot bullets. Their artillery took up the sombre music from the plateau over against the valley, and the height was at once untenable. I was behind a tree in front of the Exercise Platz when it began. What of German defence there was lay entirely to the left of me, and there was nothing between the Frenchmen and the trees but a Uhlan's horse careering wildly, riderless. This isolation might have been of service as not calculated to draw the French fire, had the gentlemen who plied that fire only been aware of it; but to make sure they blazed away at the height all along its length. Bullets had struck the tree behind which I stood, and a shell had ploughed a spiteful furrow athwart the Exercise Platz in my rear. Evacuation seemed eminently advisable, and so I started at a run and got into the dip of the road without any casualty. The fusiliers were making a short rally on the bank above it, and the ping of the bullets flew over the road high above my head. As I stopped to take breath, a fusilier on the edge of the bank was shot through the back and came crashing down the shrubs on to the road at my feet. His back was broken, I think; anyhow, he could not move the upper part of his body, but he took a grateful pull at the flask which I held to his lips. As I passed downward towards the town I found the Uhlans drawn up in the shelter formed by the bend of the road as it winds up to the Bellevue. The whizz of the bullets coming over the bank above them, and the sight of the beaten-back fusiliers, convinced them of the inadvisability of proceeding further. They went about and retreated through Saarbrück, over the bridge through the suburb of St. Johann, and having passed the railway station took

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post on a road leading into the interior. Just as I turned the corner which brought me in sight of the Uhlans a shell burst in the centre of a knot of fusiliers who were hurrying down the road. Had the party been in the shell itself, it could not have been more effectually shattered. A sergeant and five men were struck down by this one shell—how many of these were killed I did not stop to look.

By this time the French had crowned the heights all along, and were driving the German fusiliers down the inner slope towards us; and they had been very quick with their artillery. Already they had got one battery on to the *coll* at the pleasure-garden, and another showed its teeth through the trees of the Exercise Platz. One could see the quick flashes in rapid succession. All Saarbrück and St. Johann were of course fully commanded. The town was naturally in a state of intense excitement, but the people in the houses lining the street that leads to the height stuck to their homes like rabbits to their burrows, even when the shells were crashing into the houses and sweeping down the thoroughfare. There was partial safety in the cross streets, where they were lined with houses on both sides, although occasionally a shell would play old gooseberry among the tiles, and make one think of Fleet Street chimney-pots in a gale of wind. But there was a space on the road to the railway station, whither I was walking, where there were no houses, and this had to be traversed before the road, turning with a sweep towards the railway station, could be reached. The townspeople were banked in masses at either verge of this *via dolorosa*, and now and then a small boy ran the gauntlet. A burgher tried it, and got a chassepot bullet through the fleshiest part of a very goodly corporation.

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My companion and myself got through in safety, and then were in a kind of triangle, off which goes the road to the station on a little rising ground, another road parallel to the frontier, and yet another across the bridge. The base of this triangle is formed by the Hotel Hagen, in which we sought refuge on finding that the railway station had been selected as the spot where the Germans were to make a final stand with the artillery which they had brought up from the bivouac. In the lee of this Hotel Hagen were collected several detachments of infantry. Others held the bridge over the Saar, that is to say, they occupied the houses commanding it. A bee-line, drawn from the cannon on the Exercise Platz to the cannon on the esplanade in front of the railway station would pass over the Hotel Hagen, and also over the bridge. The French were shelling the houses on the bridge; they were shelling the troops in the triangle in front of the hotel; they were replying with shells to the German shells from the railway station. Thus the Hotel Hagen was rather warm quarters. There was this additional complication,—that exit in any direction whatever seemed to involve more risk than staying still; so we stayed still, my companion and I. We found three or four more Englishmen there, some ladies, and a heterogeneous collection of *Zimmermädchen* and *Stallknechts*. The landlord of the Hagen was the coolest customer I have ever met. His house was being knocked about his ears, glass and crockery smashing in all directions. This exemplary Boniface asked me coolly, under these circumstances, for four groschen, the price of a bottle of seltzerwater that I had forgotten to pay for the night before. He gave me change for a thaler with the profoundest phlegm, and then grumbled that his *table d'hôte* had been bedevilled for the day. Bedevilled it certainly was,—at least that

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was the fate of the dinner. A shell had burst right in the big square stove on which is done all the cooking of a German hotel. Potatoes bespattered the roof, and gravy flowed on the floor. Some of the pans yet simmered on fragments left of the stove; others were made pancakes of against the walls. The landlady and her maidens went off into hysterics, and we had to carry them into the cellar under the back yard, a shell bursting in that enclosure as we carried them down. The staircase leading to the first floor was shattered, and communication cut off. The fronts of the houses on the opposite side of the triangle were riddled, as indeed was the Hotel Hagen. We here heard for the first time the mitrailleuses at work. They plied from the Exercise Platz down on the bridge, and the bullets spattered very closely together along the narrow track. The report was very curious and distinctive. It sounded more like the tearing sound of one of those diabolical contrivances which silly people were wont to use at Greenwich Fair, and which gave one a lively sensation of his coat being torn down the back. Any one who is too young to remember this pleasing noise may form some conception of the report of the mitrailleuse by listening to a police-rattle. It is unquestionable that the mitrailleuse fire swept the bridge thoroughly; nothing could live where its hail fell. Then the smoke began to rise where the shells had set fire to the wood-work. A building in front, one on the flank, and another in the rear of us, were all blazing. The troops under our lee scuttled off under the shelter of a wall to the railway station, and so out into the open country beyond, several of them falling in the movement. Others took their places, coming in from St. Arnual, and later those evacuating the town and falling back from the bridges; and they, too, took

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the same course, and also suffered more or less. All the while the German artillery from the station were firing directly over our heads, replying to the French fire on the heights, while the French continued to pour shells back in return.

Then the cry arose that the French had descended the slope and were actually in Saarbrück. This was confirmed from the fact that the German guns ceased firing, and it seemed that they were drawing off. Clearly we were left behind. We were, it is true, in the rear of the force to which we were attached; a safe position—but only in an advance. It appeared certain that all St. Johann, including the railway station, would be in the hands of the French in an hour or two. Four Englishmen in the Hotel Hagen, acting under the advice of a German correspondent of remarkable equanimity, concluded to wait the course of events, in the hope that if St. Johann were taken by the French to-day, it would be retaken by the Prussians to-morrow. The certainty of this was not quite apparent, and I thought it my duty, looking to the enjoyment of postal facilities, therefore, to get out of the place with all convenient speed. We left the Englishmen playing whist in the breakfast-room, and we—that is, an Austrian friend and myself—quitted the rickety shelter of the hotel, and made a run direct for the sheds near the railway station. To do this we had to cross the line of fire, and that, too, where the shells were bursting thickest. There was no help for it, for there was no other road. We ran—I own it. I think I ran faster than ever I did in my life. My friend was hit on the calf of the leg by a stone thrown up by a bursting shell, but not lamed; I was not touched. Once at the sheds, we were safe. Traversing a deep rocky cutting, across which the shells still flew, we emerged into the

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back country, and followed first the railway and then the high road to a village named Duttweiler, about five English miles behind Saarbrück. On our way we saw numerous straggling soldiers, who did not know what had happened to their regiment. They were all making for the rear. We also passed a squadron of Uhlans drawn up on the road, and commanded by a reserve officer, who gave me his card, from which I learned that he was a Heidelberg professor. After our arrival at Duttweiler most of the Uhlans and a large proportion of the infantry passed through the village on their way to the rear. They reported that Lebach was the rendezvous, a place some fifteen English miles back from Saarbrück in the Trèves direction. Small detachments had been left to watch the French and keep up the communications. The French foreposts had occupied Saarbrück and held the bridges, but no force had crossed into St. Johann.

It has been the fashion on all sides to make very merry over this "military promenade" of the 2nd August. No doubt, in the light shed upon the affair by our after-knowledge, we are entitled to set it down as something between a spectacle and a farce. But, at the time, nobody had either daring or data for suspecting that France had neither armies nor generals; and, given belongings that one is entitled to assume when a reputedly sane nation deliberately declares war, this affair of Saarbrück was undoubtedly the winning of the first trick of the game. German strategists have, naturally enough, made their own uses of a fiasco which was solely due to French unpreparedness and irresolution. It has been the fashion to argue that Saarbrück was designedly left as it was, to delude the French leaders into a belief of German unpreparedness, and to induce them to concentrate their forces, with the design of incursion, at an obviously weak

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point, upon what seemed an eligible track into the heart of Prussia; while in reality, had they obeyed the lure, and ventured inland from Saarbrück, they would have found the road barred, and the forests swarming with legions in spiked helmets. But this *ex post facto* special pleading would have been swept to the winds, if the French army had been but reasonably fit, and its commanders reasonably competent and enterprising. The fact is, that neither on the 2nd of August, nor for several days after, were the Germans ready to defend their frontier, much less to invade France, had they been attacked or resisted in the manner the precedents of France gave one the title to count on. Saarbrück was held for days "on the bounce," with a sublime audacity that could only have succeeded so long, first, because the French were not ready for offensive action, and, secondly, because their means of obtaining information were so contemptible that they did not earlier come at the knowledge of the weakness of the force opposed to them. No doubt the German commanders had means whereby they ascertained the existence of both of these conditions, and possibly presumed on this knowledge to make their concentrations more leisurely and confidently than they would otherwise have done; but that a grave risk was actually encountered was obvious to any one on the spot. It has been stated that the woods in the rear of Saarbrück swarmed with troops, which could have successfully met an attempt of the French to penetrate further into the interior. The truth is that on the night of the action there was no force nearer Saarbrück than Neunkirchen, save scattered detachments of the infantry and cavalry which had evacuated Saarbrück, and a couple of squadrons of cuirassiers holding the roads as éclaireurs. Supports did exist further in the rear, but scattered abroad

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over the face of the country, as they pursued different lines of march, with Saarbrück as the point of convergence. Had a French army of invasion pushed on through Saarbrück on the 2nd, and marched rapidly into the interior, it would not have been possible to concentrate those scattered regiments at any given point across the hostile line of march; and my firm conviction is that a Napoleon would have seen the Rhine without having had to fight a pitched battle.

It is needless to multiply evidence that it was not for strategical purposes that the Germans permitted this occupation of Saarbrück, the barrenness of which must surely have surprised themselves. There was not an officer within ten miles of Saarbrück who, for at least two days after the affair, did not expect to hear from hour to hour that the heads of the French columns were showing on the roads leading into the interior. Inside that radius, during those two days, hardly a reinforcement was pushed forward, simply because reinforcements were not as yet available. On the 3rd, a working party of engineers cut the railway below Duttweiler, that the enemy, in his expected advance, might not be able to avail himself of the iron road. Strange strategy, truly, to allow, if it could be prevented, the shelling of a German town, to expose a couple of battalions to the onslaught of a *corps d'armée* as the gallant fellows, construing their orders to "retire fighting" after their own hot and angry fashion, contested with reckless fury every inch of the ground! Strange strategy, truly, to involve that town in the all but certainty of a second shelling before it could be retaken, and of set purpose to let the enemy get foothold on a position of such dominance as the Bellevue height, commanding all the area that must be traversed by a force aiming at its recapture! No,

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the French had a chance, and a great chance, on this 2nd of August; and that they did not take advantage of it is not to be ascribed to any acts of their adversaries, but to their own inconceivable unreadiness, and to the imbecile inaction of their leaders, assignable to ignorance, treachery, divided councils, an organisation that was chaos, and an Intendance that was rotten to its remotest ramification.

Criticism of the actual defence made would be absurd. The men fought with desperate valour, and were as cool under fire as if they had been at their dinner. One company of the Hohenzollerns bore the full fire of two French regiments for twenty minutes, and then only retired on receiving an order to do so. They were severely cut up, as a matter of course. Their captain was killed and a lieutenant wounded. It is hardly to the discredit of the little force that they allowed themselves to be surprised, as they unquestionably were. There were hardly men enough for sentries all along the line, to say nothing of actual defence. A field telegraph wire along the height from Ottenhausen to St. Arnual, and extending down into the town and the railway station, would have been an important aid.

Consequent upon the German evacuation of Saarbrück, Duttweiler became a curious menagerie. The Hotel Till, the only hostelrie in the little place, is a curious, rambling erection, rather unpromising looked at from the street, but improving on more intimate acquaintance, and of the most indiarubber-like capacity. There is wing after wing of bedrooms, great bare rooms with benches, tables, and old pictures, devoted to what use it is impossible to guess, long cavernous passages, and a staircase you might drive a coach and six up and down. How a place of the size comes to be located in such a

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village I cannot tell, but it was found a very ark of refuge for the foreign waifs and strays that had been driven out of Saarbrück. My friend and myself were the first arrivals. Then came a professor in a German university, an Englishman, whom I had last seen coolly sauntering through the fire in rear of a company of German infantry, and who, when he had tired of this amusement, had struck out for himself in search of a bed, and instinctively made tracks hither. He was followed by a waggon containing a miscellaneous load. It contained the four Englishmen whom we had left over their game of whist, a German correspondent, and two ladies, one of whom had been a Sister of Mercy in the campaign of 1866, and the other had come to Saarbrück from Bohemia, on purpose to be married to a Prussian feldwebel. He was on active duty, but a special dispensation had been obtained, and the fräulein was to have been wedded on the Tuesday forenoon. The ceremony was to have taken place in the Hotel Hagen, but the French shells postponed its performance. The officer went one way with his regiment, the lady came the other to be out of reach of the French. They were hardly seated when there came in an officer of the American army, who had seen the fun out and had then strolled out here. Presently arrived a couple of British officers in mufti, an English student from Bonn, an undergraduate of Oxford who had broken off a reading tour to come and see a bit of fighting, and a real live swell, with a fearful and wonderful coat, adorned with a girdle and several dozen pockets, with an eye-glass and long whiskers, a dog that seemed dearer to him than life, and a drawl that had not been perceptibly quickened by the French cannon. He—aw—had been going eastward somewhere to—aw—Constantinople or St. Petersburg, or—aw—somewhere, when

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he heard of something likely to be stirring at Saarbrück —and had come down to view its aspect through his eye-glass. The big hotel swallowed us all up somehow, and we assimilated into quite a happy family, feeding together, and looked upon with eyes of good-humoured wonderment by the honest villagers of Duttweiler.

With the only information at our command, to the effect that Lebach—far in the rear—was head-quarters for an army of advance as well as the little army of retreat, the position in Duttweiler seemed as good as any, and we accordingly did not quit it. Little worthy of chronicling occurred. In the forenoon of the 3rd a French soldier, who had been brought in a prisoner, took it into his head to make a frantic effort to escape. He got his hand cut off to begin with, and still this did not conquer his repugnance to being a prisoner of war; but a couple of pistol-shots did this very effectually. A little later there was a grand chevy after spies. One was shot down in the rear of the Hotel Till, and two more were captured in a wood above the town. A villager was torn from his home and his weeping wife. He was a Frenchman born, but a naturalised Prussian; he had, however, been playing the traitor to his adopted country by sending the French information.

In the evening of the 3rd a few of us bombarded-out vagrants walked down till we gained a prominent eminence almost overhanging the valley of the Saar, and from this we had an excellent view of the French dispositions. The sight which we saw surprised us. Away on our right front, on the shoulder of the slope by Stiring, was a large camp with artillery parked close to it. There were tents on the Exercise Platz on the Bellevue heights, with a battery of guns looking out to the right. Far away over the Bellevue, on the crown of the height

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from which I have described the French as streaming down into the valley lying between it and the Bellevue height, was a great camp of infantry, occupied obviously by several brigades. What lay in the valley we could not tell, but it was hardly likely that it did not serve to conceal a large force. On the slope above St. Arnual was another camp, but comparatively a small one. For all this we were not unprepared, but we were certainly not prepared for what we saw far away to the left in the direction of Saarguemines. A good field-glass clearly made out that on a broad plateau that must have been beyond Saarguemines, for it was certainly distant fifteen miles, there lay extended a vast camp that could not have been occupied by less than a division. Setting this aside, it may be taken as a fair estimate that not less than 15,000 French troops were within the range of our vision. As I have said, what the valley concealed we had no means of knowing. It might have been empty; it might have held other 15,000 men.

From this coign of vantage it was more apparent than ever what defensive advantages the vicinity of Saarbrück might have afforded had they been utilised. The semi-circular piece of table-land at our feet almost suggested itself as a platform for heavy guns, the fire of which might have altered the issue by playing on the heights by gaining which the French gained the town. All that was wanted as the complement was the cutting down of the belts of trees which encircle the Exercise Platz. Had the fire from guns placed here not succeeded in its object, and had the French, having occupied Saarbrück and St. Johann, made longer maintenance of the table-land position untenable, both by the road and by the railway were admirable facilities for withdrawal, while the wooded slopes in rear of the table-land might have been

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held for ever by a few regiments of riflemen well supplied with ammunition. Of course the absence alike of artillery and of riflemen rendered any such disposition an impossibility, and the observation forced from us was that if the Prussians should have to exert themselves vigorously to retake Saarbrück, they might easily have saved themselves the trouble and the cost by never having allowed the French to take the place at all.

One important effect the capture, even if temporary, should have had. The railway from Trèves to Neunkirchen, and thence either to Bingerbrück or through the Pfalz by Homburg and Kaiserslautern, forming a connection with the Baden system, passes through Saarbrück, or rather through St. Johann. As a line skirting the frontier, it was of much the same value to Germany as was to France the Saarguemines-Hagenau line, which Lieutenant von Voigt had cut a few days previously. It seemed incomprehensible that if the French were to be driven out of Saarbrück, they should go without cutting this communication. Yet not only did they do so, but they left intact the great viaduct by which the line leading from Saarbrück to Metz crosses the Saar, and so did the Germans a better turn than if they had evacuated the Spicheren without a fight.

On the 4th there was a strange pause in the military operations, and some of us dwellers in the Hotel Till took advantage of the lull to pay a visit to Saarbrück. The wise man who said in his heart that all men are liars might have lived in our neighbourhood. One hour the story was that the French had evacuated Saarbrück and were in retreat, the next that they were in full march inland, and that we should do well to pack up our kits and be off. Great formalities were reported as requisite to enable us so much as to essay the task of reaching

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Saarbrück. We had to leave behind our cards, our authorisations and our money, in case of falling into the hands of the French, and being both made prisoners of war and robbed. All that we were to take were our passports. Then we had to visit the burgomaster and obtain from him his written sanction—with the official seal, of course—vouching for us as being harmless and "unsuspicious" individuals. The worthy burgomaster granted this readily, and we left him with thanks, fighting our way out from his door through a bevy of women whose husbands had been drawn for the Landwehr, and who were clamouring for some means of earning their bread. We had not gone a quarter of a mile when we came on a halted detachment of cuirassiers, whose commanding officer gave us a voucher to carry me through his outposts, and told us he supposed we should have to enter St. Johann under a flag of truce. To our surprise we found not a Frenchman in all St. Johann. I went to my old hotel, where I found interim repairs already executed, and everything in its usual condition. Occasionally there were little squalls of firing between the French from above Saarbrück and the Germans, who, in scattered parties, were in St. Johann; but the townsfolk had become familiarised to the sound of the shots, and never so much as troubled to turn their heads. Nevertheless, in these occasional trivial affairs lives were being lost and plucky things were being done. Just as we came in two of the Black Hussars made a dash to cross the old bridge into Saarbrück, not knowing whether there were Frenchmen over the way or not. A French piquet was in the Schloss Platz, and a few of the men under a sous-officier, ran down the slope to the bridge head to have a crack at the hussars. When these saw the red legs coming, they went about and rode back, chased on to the bridge by the

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latter. One of the hussars' horses fell and threw its rider. As he lay prostrate the French sous-officier sprang forward, his sword upraised to strike the hussar as he rose. The gallant horseman, however, was on his legs with one bound, with another quick movement he levelled his slung carbine, drew the trigger, and the sous-officier was a dead man. A couple of Frenchmen sprang forward to avenge the fate of their officer; but meanwhile from the St. Johann side a couple of German infantrymen had covered them, and as these two fired one Frenchman fell. This affair angered the French, who maintained for some twenty minutes a spattering fire at everything living that showed, but without effect.

We were again led to believe in St. Johann that if we wished to get across into Saarbrück it would be necessary to appear with a flag of truce, and forward to the French officer in command there a written request for permission. As we walked on one of us had a walking-stick and pockethandkerchief all ready. But we got on the new bridge, and no French sentry was visible; we crossed it, and never a Frenchman was to be seen. We reached the Platz and the post-office, and there was no more appearance of French troops than there is in the neighbourhood of the Horse Guards at guard mounting. I had been told that General Frossard was living at the Post Hotel. The people there laughed in my face when I asked the question. We traversed several streets before encountering any Frenchmen, but at length in a back street, we came upon a batch of the red-legged, blue-coated gentry. Harmless enough they looked, as they came out of a baker's shop with the long loaves under their arms, grinning from ear to ear. A *Gasthaus* was full of them, sitting drinking Rhine-wine and water. I went in and sat down as a listener. The men by their

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dialect were chiefly from Alsace and Lorraine, districts in which there is a very large German admixture. Their conversation was *de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis*, save and except politics, national or international. The townspeople confidently alleged that these Alsace and Lorraine men were with Germany at heart, but they were not so sanguine as to this after Spicheren.

After keeping the Frechmen company for a while we paid a visit to the Saarbrück hospitals. There were very few men desperately wounded. The horsemen had been chiefly hurt about the legs, the infantry soldiers about the arms or through the shoulder-parts which would be likely to be exposed by a man taking a tree as his cover. The hospital arrangements were on the whole very good, with one exception. The windows were all shut, and the rooms in consequence smelt close and stuffy, and the atmosphere was impregnated with sour tobacco smoke. Why a free circulation of air should not have been insisted on was the more remarkable, since the treatment in almost every case was the use of ice. With few men in a ward and clean recent wounds, ventilation is not so great an essential; but it struck me, were the wards crowded in hot weather by men with sloughing wounds hospital gangrene would inevitably arise. The long corridor in Scutari hospital would have been a pestilential place, but for Miss Nightingale's insistance on the freest ventilation. I did not observe that any disinfecting fluid was used in the Saarbrück hospitals. It was here that I first saw men wounded by the chassepot, and one could not fail to remark what a beautiful wound that firearm makes. It was reported after Mentana that a chassepot bullet made but a small orifice on entering, but that from its gyration it scooped at its exit a trumpet-like mouth. But here I saw stripped the wound of a man

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who had been shot through the shoulder, and it was impossible for a non-scientific man to tell whether the bullet had struck in front or rear. The people of Saarbrück were behaving to the wounded with great devotion. Several of the citizens had wounded soldiers in their houses, whom they preferred keeping there to sending them to the hospitals.

"Rümschöttel," mayor of St. Johann, was a good German, and a wise and sagacious man. We found placarded at every street-corner the following intimation from him:—

"Looking to the interests of our town, I feel called upon to request my fellow-citizens to avoid laying violent hands upon any French soldiers, but to leave such duty to our troops. It is also the duty of every well-behaved citizen to endeavour by all means in his power to prevent any such occurrence." Placards of a similar tenor, but uniformly couched in less simple and plain language, one got familiar enough with afterwards in the course of this war; but never more was there occasion for the mayor of a German town to sign such a document. The unpleasant but necessary duty ever fell by the force of events to the lot of a French functionary. I am not without suspicions that Rümschöttel's sage counsels were not taken in all cases, for the townspeople had their backs considerably up, especially the women, who fiercely resented the somewhat free manners of the French soldiers. But if the civilians were commanded to hold their hands, the troops to whom the mayor grimly alluded were displaying remarkable sagacity and alertness in "cutting out" any straggling Frenchmen. As we came into the town, we had met several prisoners being escorted into the country. General Frossard, on the evening of the attack, had sent for the mayor, and told him that his orders were very strict

against straggling and marauding, and that if any cases occurred the citizens were to take the numbers displayed on the caps of the men so committing themselves, and report the same, when the fellows would be severely punished. On the whole, the Frenchmen were reported as behaving themselves pretty well, and paying honestly enough in most cases. A brewery had, however, been laid violent hands on, and between what was drunk and what was let run, the brewer had lost beer to the value of some 3,000 thalers. It must not be imagined that although the French were not in occupation of St. Johann, it was not quite as much at their disposal as if they had.

In the early morning of the 5th, there was a considerable cannonading from the heights held by the French above Grosbliffersdorff, and simultaneously came a sudden alarm at Duttweiler, that the French cavalry were advancing in force from St. Johann, driving in the German cuirassier piquets as they came. A dropping fire of small arms in the distance was audible, and the road became alive with additional patrols, but in an hour all was silent again, and we never got to know whether there really was anything in the demonstration.

On Friday morning, anxious to obtain a general authorisation from General von Stülpnagel, of the 5th Division, who was reported to be in command at Neunkirchen and the vicinity, I went by waggon to Neunkirchen for this purpose. Along the route there was no great number of troops visible; indeed, with the exception of stray patrols, we might have been miles distant from the war. But Neunkirchen

"Showed another sight."

All around were battalions of foot regiments and regiments of cavalry, batteries of foot and of horse artillery, fields full of cattle waiting for the military butcher, parks of

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forage waggons, lanes of bread carts, masses of ambulance waggons, and all the *impedimenta* of a great army contemplating a sustained and prolonged advance. Troops were streaming into the place from all directions, notably horse artillery. I watched the entrance of three batteries of this arm of the service, and I confess I was disappointed by their appearance, remembering the dash and carriage of our English horse artillery. The men seemed to want vivacity, their uniforms were plain, the horses were inclined to be soporific, and altogether there appeared to be a want of smartness about them compared with our own Royal Horse Artillery. It remained to be proved, as it was the next day, how truly serviceable were the plain-looking men and horses.

Having obtained my authorisation with a courtesy on the part of the Prussian staff such as I have almost invariably met with from that body, I retired quietly to my quarters, with the intention of enjoying a good night's rest, from which, for two or three nights before, I had been debarred. A staff officer occupying the same quarters was good enough to furnish me with some details of the positions occupied by the first and second Armies, which sufficed to indicate very clearly that an invasion of France was imminent. The 1st Army, consisting of the 7th and 8th Corps, was advancing on the Saar, through the southern extremity of the Lower Rhine Province, mainly in a section of country having for its western boundary a line drawn northward from Saarlouis, for its eastern the frontier of the Pfalz. The 7th Corps (Zastrow) had the right wing, the left consisted of von Göben's 8th Corps. The 1st Corps (Manteuffel), which was also to form part of the 1st Army, had not yet caught up with the advance. He had not particulars as to the dispositions of the 1st Army during the night between the 5th and 6th of August,

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but those I afterwards obtained as follows:—Zastrow had his head-quarters in Lebach, and was to march next morning (the 7th) to Dilsburg. The right division of the 7th Corps, the 13th (Glümer) bivouacked in and around Puttlingen, feeling away further right toward Derlen and Knausholz. This was the right flank of the 1st Army. Glümer's orders were to advance on the 6th to the Saar at Völklingen and Rockerhausen. Kamecke, with his division (the 14th), spent the night in the vicinity of Guchenbach, with his advanced troops close up on Saarbrück. The bulk of the division was not timed to reach the frontier before the 7th. The 8th Corps stood still further back. The halting place on the 6th for its leading division, the 16th (Barnekow), had been fixed at Fischbach, and the 15th (Weltzien), still further in the rear, had its billet for Holz. Thus far as regards the 1st Army. The 2nd Army, starting from its rendezvous at Mayence, was swarming down all over the Pfalz.. Lieutenant-General Alvensleben had the right flank of it with the 3rd Corps,* and it with the 5th Cavalry Division (Rheinbaben), which was employed in covering the right flank and the front, was the only part of Prince Frederick Charles' command engaged in the fight of Spicheren. As regards its dispositions, my staff officer, since he belonged to one of its divisions, could naturally speak with greater exactitude. He believed Rheinbaben's horsemen were already in Saarbrück, and they were permeating all the country intervening between that town and Alvensleben's infantry, while they were also covering the left front of the 1st Army. This disposition brought Rheinbaben *en rapport* with Kamecke, and it will presently appear to what effect the dashing cavalry officer availed himself of his knowledge of that general's relative proximity. For the rest,

* Gustave von Alvensleben who commanded the 4th Corps is a full general.

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the 5th Division, now lying in Neunkirchen, had for its morrow's itinerary a route that would bring it to Duttweiler and Rentrisch, both villages, about five miles to the north of Saarbrück, and it was to be temporarily succeeded in its occupation of Neunkirchen by the 6th Division (Buddenbrock)—the next link in the great chain cable that was to be warped out of the Pfalz over the frontier into Frankreich. But Stülpnagel, although himself spending the night in Neunkirchen, had already projected his antennæ on the road he was to travel on the morrow—not alone such feelers as the stout squadrons of Rheinbaben, but also the 9th Infantry Brigade, commanded by the gallant Döring. That brigade had its bivouac for the night on the slopes to the south of Duttweiler, while at least one regiment of the 10th Brigade (the 52nd) was forward also on the southern road, with its night halt in St. Ingbert. Every disposition indicated the proximity of a grand and methodical concentration in the Saar valley, with Saarbrück for its centre; but there was an absence of urgency in the arrangements that certainly gave no earnest of belief in the imminence of a battle.

I make no apology for interpolating here the following description of the battle of Spicheren furnished to me by a Prussian gentleman who enjoyed exceptional advantages both for seeing the incidents of the fight and for obtaining accurate information as to its details. He had been educated as a staff officer, and had served in that capacity in the war of '66; and having temporarily quitted the military profession, had hurried down to Saarbrück with intent to join, at his own charges, some cavalry regiment in which there might be a vacancy for an officer. When Spicheren was fought he had not yet been posted to any appointment, and was therefore free

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to devote himself wholly to observation, while he could ask questions and go unchallenged to positions not to be thought of by persons without his advantages. I have taken pains to test his facts, and being fully impressed with their accuracy, have used no freedom with them, although I have ventured to take some little liberty in rendering his language.

"In the early morning of the 6th, about four o'clock, I was aroused by the bugle blast, and an hour after came the quick march of soldiers on their way to the front. A couple of regiments passed towards the railway station; another regiment started along the high road. Among the troops there was no confusion, but certainly no want of alacrity. A visit to the railway station showed me that, with a couple of battalions in waiting, and no train expected other than indefinitely, the railway afforded a very precarious means of transit, so I returned and got a place in a waggon, in which, after breakfast, I started for Saarbrück by the southern road. Presently we passed the infantry, striding along manfully, and I had not gone six miles when I heard in the distance the rattling sound in the still morning air, which no man who has ever heard it can mistake for anything else than the noise of moving artillery. By this time I was through St. Ingbert, where the 52nd were halting with stacked arms, and soon after, at a turn of the road, our waggon was overtaken by two batteries of artillery, coming along at a swinging canter. The driving boy entered into the spirit of the thing, and I offered him double fare if he would only keep up with the horse artillery. He tried it right manfully, but the waggon was clumsy, and so was the harness; and in the ascent, at the slope leading to Scheidt, he brought his team to a standstill and struck. Spite of his remonstrances, I got the off horse out of his harness, and, mounting the

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animal barebacked, set off in pursuit of the artillery. I overtook them a little beyond Scheidt, where they had halted for a few minutes to give the horses their wind, and found that they belonged to Stülpnagel's division, and that they had been making haste to overtake infantry that was in their front. Hurrying on (for by this time it was nearly eleven o'clock) I overtook, just as the Saar valley at St. Arnual opened up, the tail of a part of Döring's brigade, which that officer had brought forward on a reconnaissance. The head of the column was already engaged. Looking over the meadow toward St. Arnual, I could see how the ditches and hedges athwart it were lined sparsely with very energetic skirmishers. The French had a battery outside the village, sweeping the crossing of the stream, and the guns were playing on the road by which Döring's men were débouching into the open. His skirmishers, by the heady way they pressed forward, seemed eager by themselves to carry St. Arnual, and turn by the manœuvre what was evidently the point on which rested the left flank of the French. Away on the right, Saarbrück seemed the centre of a pandemonium. On the Exercise Platz shells were bursting, and it seemed as if batteries were in action on the height; but this, as it turned out, was not the case. All up the slope leading from the town towards the Exercise Platz were heard the crack and seen the smoke-puff of the needle-gun, as the German infantrymen pressed on to the summit. But in our own immediate front we had quite enough to engage our attention. Stülpnagel's artillerymen had unlimbered, and were blazing into St. Arnual and the French. Suddenly the latter gave ground. Their guns limbered up, and their infantry melted away backward into the wood. Certainly it was not wholly the German fire that caused this sudden retreat; some order must have come from

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head-quarters. No matter what was the cause of it, the German horse artillery were in motion again like a flash of lightning. Through the river dashed the guns, sending up the spray in jets, on to the turf with a strain and a bound, and then with a loosened rein into St. Arnual! Here there was another brief stand, then another limber up, and the horse artillery at a sweeping gallop passed round the St. Arnual bluff out of my sight, whether into the valley beyond or to climb the 'Winterberg' I could not tell.

"For my part, I rode into Saarbrück on my bare-backed steed, which I handed over to the 'stallknecht' of the Reinischer Hof, in St. Johann, to be claimed by his owner. Upon the railway-station esplanade I found, in the persons of one or two dead soldiers, the evidence that the battle had extended thus far. On the bridges joining St. Johann and Saarbrück lay others, and the townsfolk were attending to the wounded. At the head of the old bridge stood a French gun, a trophy, so far, of conquest. The steep slope up to the Exercise Platz had evidently not been taken without some fighting, although it had been held only by some straggling outposts of Frossard's rear-guard belonging to the Division Vergé. The French had obviously not been idle during the days in which they had occupied the heights overlooking Saarbrück. A continuous line of entrenchment had been thrown up across the crest, with earthworks of more importance for stronger infantry detachments at intervals. But it was evident that no serious attempt had been made to hold this hither line. Indeed, as I learned in Saarbrück, the brigade or division (whichever it was) that had held the heights and plateau behind it had fallen back everywhere on the previous night but one. On the 5th Rheinbaben's patrols, pushing forward after their

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manner, had discovered how feebly the Exercise Platz was held, and early on the morning of the fight their explorations had not only satisfied their leader that it had been almost wholly deserted under cover of the darkness, but had impressed him with the conviction that Frossard was beginning a retrograde movement, which should include the abandonment of the yet more advantageous position on the Spicheren Berg and the elevated ground about Stiring with the entrenched position across the valley, stretching like a curtain between the two strong flank-positions." Whether Rheinbaben was not too sanguine, or at all events premature in this conclusion, is a question that doubtless would have occasioned more controversy if the issue of the fight that ensued mainly upon it had been different. "He lost no time in dispatching the intelligence to General Kamecke, who, as commanding the division nearest to the scene of action, at once took upon himself the responsibility of ordering an attack on what it appears certain he considered was but the enemy's rear-guard. He sent back notice of his intention to Zastrow, altering by the tidings the leisurely character of that general's advance on Dilsburg. Kamecke himself, with characteristic impetuosity, galloped on to overtake his leading brigade (the 28th), which had got close to Saarbrück, when he caught up with it. Without losing a moment, Kamecke pushed Rheinbaben's horsemen up the slopes to the Exercise Platz, covering the intervals between the roads with skirmishers, thrown out from the heads of his infantry columns, while some of his artillery unlimbered on the St. Johann side of the stream, and plied the plateau of the Exercise Platz with shell-fire until the advance of the cavalry and infantry compelled a cessation. It was while this was going on that Döring's reconnaissance reached the valley opposite to St. Arnual.

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I afterwards learnt that he sent the battalions composing it down the river to support Kamecke's direct attack.

"As I passed through Saarbrück, and took my way up the winding road to the Exercise Platz, it was already past eleven. Woyna's infantry brigade (the 28th) and Rheinbaben's cavalry were already over the ridge and striking steadily down into the valley intervening between it and the Spicheren Berg and the French position. Hurried movements, executed by large bodies of men, were visible through the glass all along the latter. Streams of soldiers were pouring over the horizon, and rushing down to line the entrenched edge of the bastion-like Spicheren. On the little quarterdeck-like plateau, just behind, the batteries had already got into position, and the shells were dropping fast among the Woynas and Rheinbabens as they pushed forward into the valley. Other batteries had opened fire also from a little eminence to the French left of Stiring. These did not have it all their own way. Four batteries Kamecke had already got into action—three aligned with the trees on the Forbach margin of the Exercise Platz, one on the other side of the Saarbrück-Forbach road. The fire of these was concentrated on the Spicheren Berg, while already down in the valley one heard the rattle of the musketry fire, and now and then came the sharp ping of a chassepot bullet.

"And the mouth of the scooped-out cross-road where it joins the main road opposite the Bellevue beerhouse, sat Kamecke on horseback, not quite so cool, perhaps, as the circumstances demanded. With abrupt gestures and jerky messages he was hurrying up his division to the attack. The long columns strained up the steep hill in extra quick time, the men puffing and blowing as the top was gained, and as the battalions marched down the

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further slope and took ground right and left of the main road across the valley. Here the young soldiers got their baptism of fire, and the veterans of '66 had recollections freshened that might have faded into dimness as the years of peace had rolled over their heads. For now, not alone over their heads, but into their ranks, hurtled the angry shells, the jets of white smoke and the temporary disruption of the formation showing ever and anon where one had burst. The leading battalions lay down while the deployment was in progress, but still the shells spared them not. Kamecke's artillery as it came up in detachments took ground right and left, some of it on the height, some batteries rattling down the road and opening fire on the slope at shorter range. One or two batteries were pushed out to the right hand corner of the Exercise Platz to give reply to the French batteries that were in so energetic action on the knoll flanking Stiring. But artillery, infantry, and cavalry—for all were now within range of vision from the corner of the Exercise Platz overhanging the steep road—made up what seemed full too weak a force to cope with what was before it; nor was there any indications of the speedy advent of supports.

"Presently there was a move down in the valley. The Woynas (28th Brigade) were heading away to the German right front to engage the French left resting on Stiring. The gallant von François, one of a race of soldiers, himself that day to meet a soldier's death, led his stout Westphalians of the 27th brigade direct on that abrupt mountain mass that frowned out upon the plain, its summit already marked by the fringe of white smoke from the chassepots of the Frenchmen lining the entrenchment. There were French skirmishers in the bottom of the valley and on the little foothold places on the precipitous incline.

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On the level the Westphalians sent these back as if they too had been smoke. But it was no fair stand-up fight man to man. From the top of the Berg chassepot, mitrailleuse, field-gun concentrated on the on-marching battalions their powers of destruction. With a steady, rather slow, step they pressed onward constantly, leaving behind them on the plain a terrible proportion of their number. The slowness of the pace was characteristic.

"The German is a man of method and of stubborn pith. Under this death-hail the dressing seemed as systematic as on the parade at Düsseldorf, the touch of man to man as accurate. Ever as a shell crashed through a company, or the mitrailleuse opened a lane and strewed it with dead and wounded, the men flanking the gap closed in with a grim coolness which impressed one with the conviction that men who could act so could not be beaten. When the foot of the Berg was reached, the pace quickened and the formation broke. It was now like the forlorn hope of a besieging army storming a breach rashly reported practicable. Men scrambled upwards and forwards anyhow. The officers threw themselves from their horses, and took perforce to climbing on foot. Now the leader on a rugged pathway would go down, and, as he rolled backward, he would tumble his followers with him in pell-mell confusion. Officers were seen throwing forward their swords, men their needle-guns, and clambering up after their weapons on their hands and knees. There were little protected liebys here and there, and under these shelters the men packed as you may have seen sheep huddle before a high wind with a snow-drift borne on it. Thither crept, too, the wounded out of the fire that spared them when wounded no more than when they had been hale fighting men. Then when the sound men had caught their wind again,

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they would dash out, and make another convulsive scramble upward, ever upward. On the brink you might see the Frenchmen bending over the lip of the crest to get more purchase with their downward aim. A mitrailleuse was balanced on the edge by men clinging to the wheels and the trail, while its honeycomb-like muzzle went down, pointing among the strugglers, its butt end high in air. Kamecke had asked men to do an impossibility. There are parts of the Spicheren, notably that part just on the left of the extreme bluff nearest Saarbrück, which are not to be surmounted without scaling ladders. Von François's men were brought to a standstill. There was no alternative but to fall back. Fortunately there was no necessity for a retreat right athwart the valley. Out of its centre there rise several low detached mamelons not of sufficient elevation to give any dominance as against artillery on the Spicheren Berg, but affording better positions for batteries than the plain itself, and furnishing cover behind which troops might enjoy at least a partial protection. Two of these bear the names respectively of the Galgenberg (Gallows-hill) and the Folster Höhe, while behind the latter is some broken ground, with a house or two and some water, the spot bearing the name of the Drathzug. On to these two little eminences the artillery of Kamecke's division had been hurried forward to attempt some support and distraction for François's brigade, and when the latter had to cease its bootless efforts to carry the Spicheren, it fell back to reorganise itself behind the knolls on which the gunners, themselves suffering severely, were plying the enemy with shrapnel-shells. Kamecke's cavalry had drawn forward in the valley, behind the shelter afforded by the Gallows-hill and the Drathzug, strengthened by two regiments of hussars from Rheinbaben's cavalry division. As the 27th Brigade drew

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back sulkily, the French skirmishers dashed down from the plateau, eager to hang on the skirts of the retreating Westphalians. There are two steep country roads that get down from the summit into the valley by a series of slants and zigzags, and these were extensively utilised by the French skirmishers, who pushed down even into the valley taking advantage of what cover was available, as ever and anon François's men turned savagely at bay. But the skirmishers' *bon quart d'heure* was very short. From behind the Gallows-hill dashed out right and left the keen-sabred troopers of the 11th and 13th Hussars. Galloping through and round their friends, they were on the Frenchmen like a thunderbolt, and the tirailleur-nimbleness of the plucky little Frenchmen availed but little not a few of them. So hot was the fury of the Hussars that they recklessly charged the Berg that had broken the hearts of the infantrymen. They were not long in discovering that their riding-school lessons did not include practice in crag-climbing, and they went back wiser men than before; while to some it was not vouchsafed to apply the experience in after-life. But the sections which formed themselves on the more westerly road up the heights saw before them a track which looked practicable. With mad valour the blue troopers dashed on and up, strewing the road with living débris as they advanced. How near the summit one at least of them must have got I never knew till next day, when I saw a dead hussar and a dead horse tumbled over into a ravine three-fourths of the way up. I saw them ride up. I never saw any of them ride back.

"While the 27th Brigade was re-forming under cover of the guns, Woyna, with the 28th Brigade, having struck away to the left by the Folster Höhe, was steadily fighting his way up toward Stiring, on which the French left

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flank leant apparently in considerable strength. His troops had fair cover in the broken woodland on either side of the railway and the mill-dams, while the railway cutting, deep as it is in places, and not straight for a long enough distance to be raked, also afforded opportune protection. He had, however, to fight every step of the ground, amid a terrific shell-fire that set alight to a terrace of workmen's houses on the western side of the railway, that seemed to have been temporarily occupied by the German troops. But Woyna's progress was terribly slow, and the French fire never slackened." What his losses were, the journeyer on the railway may yet form a vague conception as he looks out upon the numerous green hillocks in the forest glades or the little clearings. There is a little signal-house on the railway that must have been the focus of a fearful fire. No shells had struck it, but when I saw it the day but one after the battle I could not find a space the size of this page which did not show the easily-read print of the impact of a bullet.

"Von François's men were not convinced by the lesson they had received as to the inaccessibility of the Spicheren Berg. They must have one more useless essay at the impossible. I do not know whether Kamecke gave the order or not, but the diminished companies came out yet again to the open, and once more breasted the lower slopes of the hill. By this time the fire of the division's artillery, plied as it was unremittingly, had made the edge of the Berg a very hot place, and the Westphalians were hardly so much torn as they had been on their first attempt. But the French general must have recognised how fatal to him would be their success. They must be repulsed *coûte qui coûte*. So the Frenchmen, standing in the shell-fire, again lined their intrenchment, and leaning over, rained death upon the struggling bearers of the

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needle-guns. Some of von François's men staggered up through the storm, till they reached the shelter of a rock which, overhanging, supports a section of the verge of the sloping plateau above; and there, powerless to go further, and objecting to go back, they cowered in comparative safety, so close under their enemies that they might almost have grasped the muzzles of the chassepots. Von François himself was down, a fearful proportion of his officers had fallen, and the brigade had to own itself foiled, and give up what it seemed to have set its heart upon to achieve. But it went no more back behind the guns. These forced the French to hold their hands greatly, and the German infantry men, with a bulldog-like stubbornness, lay down among the furrows and by the hedgerows along the foot of the Berg. If they could not carry it, at least they would not leave it.

"It was now close on three o'clock, and Kamecke must surely, after the example of one greater than he, have been looking often and often at his watch, and muttering that would to God night or Zastrow would come. But there were succours nigher at hand than any Zastrow could bring. As it came toward its halting ground at Fischbach, the cannon-thunder came wafted on the wind to Barnekow's division. Von Göben was on in advance of his corps; von Göben, to whom the *Kanonendonner* was ever sweet music. There was no halt for the 16th Division this long summer day. By two the mazed people of Saarbrück saw with joy their old friends of the 40th, as the staunch Hohenzollerns hurried over the bridge to get on to the heights where they had already tasted blood. Von Göben rode on to the Exercise Platz, and took in the situation at a glance. It was truly a critical one. The 40th he sent straight out into the plain, to support the broken left flank of the 27th Brigade, and rode

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on himself to the Gallows-hill to take the command out of Kamecke's hands in virtue of his superior rank. The 40th Regiment was as yet all that the 8th Army Corps had to say for itself, if we except von Göben: but other troops than Barnekow's division had heard the cannon-thunder. By half-past two there was streaming round the shoulder the mass of Döring's brigade, the 9th, of the 5th Division (Stülpnagel), summoned from its bivouac by Duttweiler when its general had found that his reconnaissance was the road to a battle. It had already done some fighting about St. Arnual, and had established the fact that the right flank of the French was now in the forest of Spicheren, which clothes the somewhat less abrupt slopes from the precipitous part of the Berg eastward in the direction of Berbach. As Döring advanced, he fell into position on the left of the 40th Regiment, with his front looking into the dark forest that rose before him. Other advance regiments of the 5th Division presently reached him, and the aid, no great thing as it was, looking at the work to be done, gave relief to the 14th Division, engaged as it had been right up to the hilt. The attack on the Berg was renewed but in part, the 40th undertaking the less precipitous section lying next the wood of Spicheren, while Döring's regiments, under cover of a fire from part of the artillery of the 3rd Corps, which had just come up, went straight at the forest itself. The 40th had traditions of storming prowess. It had shown the way over the fortifications of Düppel; but the Spicheren Berg was harder than had been Düppel. What fighting it was to be sure, all along from the nose of the bluff eastward to the right verge of the wood! Three times did the Germans charge the hill and the wood—scarcely less a hill; three times did the French, fighting with a stubborn fury that was of the un-

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degenerate days, hurl them back with a withering fire right in their teeth almost at arm's length. For two stricken hours was the result dubious. But at five Alvensleben came on the ground with fresh supports belonging to the 3rd Corps, and one more attack was joined. Steadily climbed on the 40th up the steep green slopes. Döring's men were over the trench on the edge of the wood and in among the trees. There is something horrible in the suspense of a fight in a wood. You see little or nothing; there is an occasional flash, and in the casual openings glimpses of troops swaying and heaving, like sea-waves in the chasm of a cavern; then there is an interval with nothing visible but the calm green tree-tops, which mock you when you know that hell is raging below them; and the hell is continually dropping its red-hot coals through the bars of the furnace, in the shape of wounded men who come staggering out from behind the trunks, halting often as they come. How is it to go? Are the blue-coated men you saw go in to be vomited forth again the way they went, with the red-breeched men hot and triumphant on their flanks, plying the devil's pitchfork to hoise them wherewithal outside? or has this Spicheren hell a thoroughfare through it, and are the blue-coated men, having battled through the furnace, to reach the grill on the further side, and draw breaths of cooler air there? The white smoke surges up fitfully through the dark-green boughs of the fir-trees; still the wounded men stagger out, and still the issue is uncertain.

"But if we could not penetrate the secrets of the wood, we might, at all events, watch the course of the Hohenzollerns on its flank. Slowly, and evidently with arduous effort and terrible loss, they pushed on their dogged way. At length they were over the worst in the

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point of climbing, and into the worst in point of musketry fire, as they reached a kind of natural glacis before the French entrenchment. Watching them through the glass, one seemed to see the men straightening themselves up and pulling themselves together; then, as it seemed, with one great effort of their muscular loins and hips, they shot forward on to the top of the earth-bank. For one moment it was as if they hung here, and then fell forward, lurching down as it were on the Frenchmen who lined the trench. They say there was no actual bayonet fighting; from behind, it certainly looked as if for a couple of minutes there was a hand-to-hand fight; on the near side the dogged, weighty mass of the men in spiked helmets, leaning forward with a terrible *vis inertiæ;* no the further, a seething, bobbing, gyrating, frantic throng of marionnette-like men in red breeches. The spiked helmets seemed with their sheer weight and irresistible pressure to drive back the red breeches as a masterful wave sweeps the foam before it; and when the berg was won, the wood was won also. Döring's Brandenburgers were not to be flouted by the Hohenzollerns. The wood was theirs, and cleared of French as the latter became aligned with its edge on its western flank. We saw little more for the time of the fight here, but the din that came back to us proved that all was not over on the upland when the Spicheren wood had been taken.

"As we learned afterwards, the French again and again charged the wood with fury, and even once or twice penetrated into it. The Hohenzollerns, dreading lest with the impetuosity of the rush they should be swept bodily back off the plateau, had to seek something at once of ground-anchorage and of cover among the trees. It was impossible for infantry alone to make its way upward and onward on the plateau. The call was for artillery, and

artillery came. Two batteries of Stülpnagel's division, that had been firing from before the Winterberg before the duel in the dark began in the wood, limbered up, and made for the rough winding track by the edge of the wood. The drivers were resolute, and the horses were strong. In ten minutes the gunners were at "action front" in the very faces of the French infantry, who had no alternative but to give way, for they had been deserted by their artillery; so, fighting desperately as they went, they fell slowly back, and the Germans pressed on, gradually making the plateau their own. So the French right wing was turned, and the battle of Spicheren virtually won.

"Certainly on the German right there seemed little indication that such a result had been achieved. Zastrow, with part of the reserve artillery of his corps, had come over by the railway bridge on to the battle-field at half-past four, superseding in his turn von Göben in right of seniority. Zastrow had been trying strategical experiments with his 13th division (Glümer), which was out of the hunt, away by Völklingen, marching along, as we afterwards learnt, in blessed unconsciousness of what was going on so near it, the wind setting the other way, till an aide-de-camp from Zastrow, who reached Glümer about five o'clock, gave him a new direction and a stimulus to speed. But Zastrow had not at hand available troops of his own corps. The quiet and prompt Alvensleben (who was also already in the field) had got up nearly the whole of Stülpnagel's division, and there were regiments available to participate in offensive action on the right, as well as to carry the Spicheren wood on the left. All the afternoon Woyna had been fighting doggedly forward till he had edged the French out of Stiring, and well across the valley from their entrenchments behind

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the iron-works of Stiring Wendel, on to the Kreuzbach, which may be called roughly a prolongation of the Spicheren-berg toward Forbach. Zastrow sent on a brigade of infantry and some artillery to attack this strong position; but the French, whose left had been strengthened by a division of Bazaine's corps, anticipated the offensive, coming down in great force into the valley, no doubt with a design to cover Forbach at least for a time. The German artillery, which was now in strong force about the railway, played terrible havoc with this effort on the part of the French, who, however, persevered with a tenacity that seemed to partake of despair. At length Stülpnagel's infantry were sent forward to precipitate the action, and this they did, by driving the French up the Kreuzbach, and storming it on their heels. This movement turned the French left on its part, so that while they were being hustled backward over the plateau on the right, they were being all the more shoved on to it from the Kreuzbach toward Spicheren and Alsting from the left. The confusion of the cross streams must have been immense, especially as the roads along which retreat alone was possible were by no means either good or plentiful. While Frossard held Forbach he had the key to the main *chaussée* to Metz; but Zastrow's strategetical experiment turned up a trump in the twilight. Glümer's division (the 13), bearing round from Völklingen by Ludweiler and Rosseln, came down upon Forbach from a due westerly direction, and frightened the French out of it with hardly any fighting." The other divisions had got all the mauling; Glümer's had had the furthest marching, and now came in for the heaviest loot; for the French evacuated Forbach in hot haste, and, after an absurd attempt to wreck the station and its multifarious contents by sending an engine to run

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amuck down a siding and on to the station, left everything as it stood, from scents and *bonbons* to flour and munitions of war.

"There was in the dusk a kind of miscellaneous fighting all across the plateau, about the villages of Spicheren, Alsting, and Etzling. The French seemed never to know when they were beaten. Although regimental formation had become for the most part shattered in the mass which acted as the rear guard, detachments and groups fought passionately. It seemed as if the fight was to last all night. It became impossible in the dusk to distinguish between friend and foe. The French were reported to have sustained serious injury through a blunder of this kind, in which countrymen slew countrymen. The Prussians adopted the expedient of shouting 'Hurrah Preussen!' and the hoarse, deep-throated cry ever and anon came backward from out the din, the smoke, and the fire-flashes with a strange weird effect. At length these detachments and groups either fell back or went down till the front was tolerably clear of Frenchmen. Then their artillery struck in for the last word. It had been got into position about Kerbach to cover the retreat on Puttelange, and was well and staunchly served to the last. The Germans with some little over-confidence, pressed it rather too closely, and then the French infantry yet once more showed how it carried a sting in its tail." It must have been a ragged array that resumed the offensive thus in the darkness, but there is no doubt of the fact that a determined front after a fashion was shown. Yet there might have been some attempt at a pursuit, but that all the German army, with perhaps the exception of Rheinbaben's cavalry division, was jaded with long marching and fighting. So beyond Kerbach, Frossard was let pursue in peace his disorganised and

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disorderly retreat. They had left of their goods and chattels in Spicheren, as well as in Forbach. "The firing had not wholly died away till after nine o'clock. As I walked back over the plateau, down the steep, across the valley, and on to the Exercise Platz, I had constantly to pick my way very carefully. It is a dismal sensation to stumble over a dead man. It is even a greater shock to force unwittingly a groan of pain from a poor wounded wretch lying helpless in his blood, waiting for the succour that, come how soon it may, is ever over-tardy. How many, both of dead and of wounded, flecked the brown surface of the heights I could then form no estimate; I only knew this, that the number of both was very great. Spiked helmets and red breeches blended together as closely as if they had been bosom friends all their lives. The hospital corps with their ambulances were swiftly picking up the wounded and carrying them off to be tended. Their organisation seemed excellent. More than once I saw in the pale ray of a moonbeam a female form swathed in black, with the white patch and the cross on the breast, bending over a prostrate form, or flitting ghostlike in the van of an ambulance party." God bless the Sisters of Mercy in a night like this, say I, whether they are Roman Catholic or whether they be Protestant. Christianity on a battle-field can well afford to sink sectarianism. There were days and nights of bloodshed to come, when no Saarbrück convent should be close by to send out its courageous sisterhood on to the brink of the *Schlachtfeld.*

The Germans had, in all, engaged about 40,000 men, including the division Glümer, and probably Frossard, even with the reinforcement from Bazaine, was not so strong by some 12,000. Deducting Glümer's division, which, although it came under fire, and therefore, strictly

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speaking, must reckon as being in the field, took no real part in the action, the hostile forces were about equally matched in point of numbers. It is no exaggeration to say that its position represented to the French army a value equivalent to another army of equal strength. The German loss was terrible—over 4,300 men killed and wounded. Nearly all the loss fell on the 14th division, only a portion of the 5th division, and the 40th Regiment. Probably the whole loss falls to be apportioned on a force under 20,000 men, and this would bring out the loss as one in five—an exceptionally heavy percentage. The loss in officers was by far too heavy on the German side. The French left 2,000 unwounded prisoners in German hands.

The battle of Spicheren was won solely by the stubborn valour of the German soldiers, and by the cannon-thunder. The record of it contains no evidence of the influence of a master-mind over its dispositions and results. General Kamecke was probably justified in his effort to make a snap-shot for a victory, but certainly he had no right to engage himself so closely and generally as he did, until he had far better assurance than he had that he might reckon on supports when the time should come for him to want them. He might have secured his end, at far less expenditure of human life, by using his division discreetly to keep the French in play on both flanks, instead of abusing it as he did by an effort for the direct storm of such a position as the Spicheren-berg. It does not appear that he had any cognizance of Stülpnagel's ability to come to his support in the opportune moment, or, indeed, that he communicated at all with Alvensleben's corps. What succour he derived from this source—and how invaluable was that succour, the preceding details have demonstrated—came to him from the

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fortunate circumstance that Döring's reconnaissance in the morning put that officer on the *qui vive*, and from the accident that the wind set in such a direction as to carry the sound of the cannonade into the back country. The responsibility of the day's work, in so far as it was disastrous, rests with Kamecke; and there seems every probability that had the first army—the support which was all that he appears or, indeed, was entitled to have calculated on—constituted the whole available force, the marker in the war-game would have had to score a victory for the German arms between Saarbrück and Forbach on the 6th of August. That Kamecke was not defeated before supports came up, was owing solely to the stoutness of his Westphalians; and that victory was ultimately achieved was owing to the fact that Stülpnagel and Alvensleben were prompter than was Grouchy in marching on the sound of the cannon. All's well that ends well. The victory had an immense moral effect. It must have been in the light of the experience furnished them at Spicheren that the French huddled backward under the shells of the forts of Metz, without attempting to utilise the many tempting positions for a stand which the configuration of the ground afforded them by the way. General Steinmetz has been erroneously blamed for the waste of life at Spicheren. The fact is that the gallant old soldier was responsible for nothing on the 6th of August, unless it might be for the circumstance that he did not happen to be nearer the front. He did not get into Saarbrück until the evening.

I walked out on the battle-field on Sunday afternoon. All up the steep which rose out of the valley all the way from over against the Exercise Platz to near Forbach, a distance of some four miles, the dead of the German army lay thickly. At the bottom of the steepest place

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there was quite a fringe of butchery that had rolled downward in obedience to the law of gravitation, a grim alluvial deposit made by the torrent of shot. On the little level shoulders of the steep graves were being made, into which the burial-parties were huddling

"Friend and foe,
In one red burial blent."

Some of the ravines leading on to the height, where it is indented by the bay between the Spicheren-berg and the Kreuzberg, had been the scenes of desperate fighting. In a little gully just at the top of one of these I found a dozen Prussians lying dead, piled one above another in inextricable confusion. Elsewhere they lay as thick. Inside the intrenchments it was the turn of the Frenchmen to be found dead in the greatest numbers. The ditch itself was full of them. For several yards inside the intrenchments it was impossible to step without treading on dead humanity. The fight had been equally deadly all over the plateau, where the corn and grass were trodden into the brick-like ground that was yet in places soft and soppy with blood.

Saarbrück, which had chafed mightily under the presence of the Frenchmen on the heights above them and occasionally in their midst, no sooner saw victorious Germans on the Exercise Platz than it broke out into a spasmodic eruption of flags symbolical of victory, and generally went half crazy with joy. But there was real work for Saarbrück to do in manifestation of its national and indeed human sympathies, and the flags and phlegmatic caperings were only a preliminary outburst. The wounded were to be removed from off the battle-field, as the tide of war surged forward and left its *débris* behind. Right energetically did Saarbrück rise to the occasion. I do not believe there was a man or a woman or a boy or

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a girl in all the town who did not help to carry wounded soldiers off the field. The medical arrangements were decidedly defective. No such sudden call on the services of the department had been anticipated, and the staff both of bearers and of surgeons was far from strong enough, nor was there enough of hospital accommodation. The first and the last wants Saarbrück did its best to supply. Into every room of every house, into every shed and outbuilding, were carried wounded men. My hotel was full of them, from the *salle à manger* to the fortress in which Boots cleaned his knives and brushed the clothes. Fifteen poor fellows lay all night on straw in an outhouse without medical aid. In the morning three of them were dead. On Sunday began the transport by railway into the interior of such as could be moved, this being a wise provision for keeping the frontier hospitals available for the wounded in future actions; 2,000 were so sent away on the Sunday and Monday, both Prussian and French, their destinations being the large towns all along the Rhine. As I left Saarbrück the procession to the station was unbroken of litters and hand-ambulances, of pale men with arms in slings, or limping, supported by a couple of sympathisers. One I saw pass in a wheelbarrow.

CHAPTER III.

Courcelles, Spicheren, and Gravelotte.

If one lingered long in Saarbrück, it became apparent, so rapid was the advance, that he might find himself out of the hunt altogether. Indeed, when I quitted Saarbrück on the afternoon of Tuesday, the 9th of August, I was already in the rear of most of the army of Steinmetz, and behind, likewise, no small proportion of the vast host

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of Prince Frederick Charles. Instead of tramping to Forbach by the road, I took a final walk over the scene of the battle-field of the Saturday.

By Monday at mid-day all the wounded had been removed and most of the dead buried. The whole of the ground was thickly dotted over with graves. The burial-parties had been pious in those their ministrations to the dead. Few of the mounds but were surmounted with a rude cross, made of a couple of sticks lashed together with a buckle strap. Others were more elaborate, the cross board being flat and having inscribed upon it the number interred, their rank and regiment. Already the townspeople had decorated some of the graves with shrubs and flowers, but most of the decorations consisted of bayonets and swords stuck in the soil—tokens that soldiers lay below. Friend and foe slept at peace with each other in one grave. The inscription over one of the largest on the first Spicheren height I thought worth copying:—

"Hier ruhen in Gott
29 Preussen und 69 Franzosen."

I walked some distance before I came to an unburied body, but in the little clefts and gulleys leading up to the second Spicheren height they still lay quite thick. There was no difficulty in discovering their vicinity. The corpse of a man slain in battle does not lie for three days exposed to the air and sun without lapsing into decomposition, and some of the bodies were horrible sights. Some could hardly have been known for human—so black and turgid were the features. The deaths had chiefly been from rifle bullets. Most of the Germans bore their death-wounds in their faces and heads, received as they stormed the terrible ascent; the Frenchmen—those who had not perished by the bayonet—were for the most part

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shot through the body, or had their legs shattered. One scene I never can forget. By the foot of a tree lay two dead German soldiers. It seemed as if they had been removed thither either during or after the fight, while as yet only wounded. Beside them were two pannikins half full of water, and a piece of bread. One, quite a lad, lay in a crouching attitude, his head bent downwards toward the tree. He had been shot through the head, and the blood had streamed on to his handkerchief and the open pocket-book in front of him. One hand grasped that of his dead comrade, in the other was an envelope. The letter it contained may have blown away, or the lad, in his last agony, may have thrust it in his breast; but the envelope itself was eloquent enough. It was addressed in a female handwriting, and bore the postmark of a little village away near the shores of the Baltic. The writer—mother or sweetheart, I know not—evidently had been the last thought of the lad. Will she come to weep over his grave among the clay-stone crags of the Spicheren? Will he, indeed, have a grave at all? The place was a lonely one, and the straggling cowherd may, months after, have chanced upon a couple of skeletons with arms and belts on the bones.

What a distance over the height had stretched the battle, I never realised until this night. Three miles away from the first bluff of the Spicheren-berg, I found dead French soldiers lying between the drills of a potato-field. And then in the growing darkness I lost my way, and had a plunge through a dense wood growing on a steep slope. There was no road, but I scrambled downward with tolerable freedom, till I stumbled over something and fell at full length. As I stretched forth my hand to raise myself it touched the face of a corpse, cold and clammy with the death-sweat. In the dark solitude of

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the wood such a contact, unpleasant at any time, was horrible, and made my blood run cold. It seemed as if everywhere I turned my feet met prostrate corpses. I struck a light, and by its dim rays found myself in the centre of a knot of some half-dozen dead French soldiers. Whether they had been slain simultaneously by the bursting of a shell, or had scrambled into the wood wounded, and died here in each other's company, I know not; I only know that I shuddered at the situation in which I found myself, and then it struck me that one of them moved. Could he be still alive? No, it was but imagination on my part. They were all dead, and sadly wanted burial. Very daintily did I pick my steps down the rest of the wooded slope, but, getting on a rough footpath, I chanced on no more corpses. But I slept very little that night, and when I did I continually dreamed of the group of dead Frenchmen. The indescribable taint of the unburied dead lingered in my nostrils for hours after.

Forbach consists mainly of one chief street, which is rather narrow. A horse falling, in a carriage, would block it up. Somehow German horses do not fall. I watched the constant stream pouring through this narrow street for half a day, and never observed a block, not even a check, for more than five minutes at a time. I do not know what sort of a place Forbach may be in ordinary times—probably a prosperous commercial town; with me it will ever be associated with semi-starvation and a narrow escape from sleeping in the gutter. In the house of a man who had been named to me in Saarbrück I had secured, as it seemed, quarters of a sort. From these a "Graf" somebody turned me out in order to let in twelve soldiers. I could not in decency object, seeing that the men had not been inside a house for eight days,

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and if I had it would not have mattered. My aliment for the succeeding twenty-four hours was a glass of liqueur and half a cigar. I spent the night among straw in an outhouse, and was thankful that I had not to take a pitch in the gutter. The soldiers had eaten up everything, drunken up everything, smoked up everything. The people were half starving; but as they starved they rejoiced, for they had charged the soldiers war prices. The commissariat arrangements had hardly yet got into order, but it was plain that even when that should have been the case, the consumption of everything available on the part of the troops would continue. Soldiers on the march are always hungry and thirsty. I wish they had left a little tobacco for an outsider though; it is easier to starve when one's pipe is full.

I was the witness of a little incident in Forbach which tends to illustrate the Prussian thoroughness that is so great a key to success. Strolling down to the railway station to inquire as to the probabilities of a *Militärzug*, I found a divisional general sitting placidly outside the station entrance, a table by his side and a bottle of wine on it, which he and the Mayor of Forbach were leisurely drinking as they smoked their cigars. Now the divisional general of an English army in the field would have been surrounded by a cordon of orderlies, and have formed the centre of a glittering staff. It would not have been permitted to a mortal of common clay to look upon his glory. This old gentleman—his name I have forgotten—sat drinking his wine without a solitary orderly in waiting, much less a staff officer. The privates and corporals of working parties were passing out and in, clearing the station of French *débris*, and the jolly old fellow now and again exchanged a word with them as they came

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within hail. Presently there was brought unto him a deputation of the bakers of Forbach, whose attendance he had ordered. Quoth the general to the bakers—"My men are temporarily short of bread; you must each by to-morrow morning turn out so many loaves. You will be paid thirty francs for one hundred loaves, and I shall take no excuse."

You should have heard the Forbach bakers jabber! The great "lord-general" was robbing them outright. They would rather give the bread for nothing. They had wives and children, and rents to pay. Would his Excellency ruin them? And so on. As they stood in the rain gesticulating, they presented a curious contrast to the grizzly German, in his waterproof, calmly smoking and sipping his wine as if he heard not the din of the terribly fluent bakers. At last they chattered themselves fairly out of breath, and then the old man turned to them with a smile, as if he just remembered their presence. "Go away, my good fellows," said he, "and hold your tongues. I can get good loaves in Deutschland, three for a franc, and I'll give no Frenchman any more." And the bakers went away in a perfect torrent of "*sacres*," but for all that to get their ovens in order to do the behests of the laconic old chief. There was no trusting to bungling commissaries here—fellows whom the Duke of Wellington was wont to couple with correspondents in his anxiety to hang. The general knew that an army must be fed, if it is to march and to fight, and he personally saw to the purveyance.

The good folks of Forbach had for the most part remained at home to receive the Prussian troops, but they did not seem any the more for this to love Prussia. They were French to the backbone, but not French of the Napoleonic pattern. They made no secret of their readi-

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ness to cry "*Vive la République*" when the time should come; and I may note that the great majority of the French prisoners to whom I spoke, while staunch for France, had no fondness for the Emperor of the French, but openly avowed their preference for a Republic. The Forbach people gave out as the reason why the French army had without resistance been retired on Metz, that the troops had manifested a discontent which made the Emperor fear to trust them in action.

An allusion to French prisoners of war calls to mind one of the basest calumnies against German humanity that ever malignity invented. It was stated in French journals that both German soldiers and German civilians were cruel and abusive to French prisoners. Never was there a grosser lie. Indeed Germany might be well content to rest her reputation on the testimony of the prisoners themselves. I have seen the people at the railway stations tender the wine-can to the prisoners before the escort. If the escort were served first, I have seen the soldiers composing it pass the pannikin to their charge before drinking themselves. I have seen French wounded carried off the field in regular routine with Germans, and getting their turn of the doctor with religious exactitude. The people of Saarbrück, when they threw open their homes, did not care whether they admitted the wearer of a spiked helmet or of a pair of red breeches. And once I saw a German escort march a French sergeant by a circuitous route round a village, that he might not form an object of attention on the part of the village boys. This was an act of delicate consideration which of itself would refute the calumnious and unfounded statements to which I have referred, and which did not a little wound the feelings of German chivalry.

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From Forbach the next stage was St. Avold, to reach which on the afternoon of Thursday the 11th of August involved a walk of some ten miles in the rain, commenced without breakfast and concluded in the most utterly blank prospect of anything to eat, or of any place wherein to sleep. Forbach seemed as full as any town could possibly be, but Forbach was not a patch on St. Avold. All the staff were there, and there, too, was half the army. I had casually heard of a dish of liver down a bye-street, and fondly hoped it would be mine. It was taken by stouthrief and hamesucken from under my nose by a masterful German sergeant of Uhlans, who swore by all the deities of the Saxon Switzerland, from which locality he derived his existence, that he would send a "kugel" through the man that interfered between him and the liver. Empty as I was, I was not eager to have the vacuum filled up by "kugels," and I let him have it with a reluctant sigh. The food and locomotion question, by the way, demands a word or two. In those early days of the war I nourished a pet theory that the best way to do the work on which I was engaged was to be "at large" in the army in preference to being attached to any head-quarters, to carry one's belongings on his back, and do one's locomotion on one's own feet. Beyond question there is a great charm to a strong healthy man in pursuing this system. If you get a bed in a house, good and well; if not, steer for the nearest camp fire, and you are generally sure of a dip into the kettle and a hunk, savoury if tough, of the mature cow which you saw sedately walking behind a baggage-cart in the morning. If you tire, you can jump on the first waggon that passes; if you see an eminence whence you think there is a view, you can climb it—and you will not count the toil wasted among such scenery as one may see among the vine slopes;—if

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it rains you get wet; but then when it fairs, and the sun comes out, you get dry again. If there is fighting in the wind, you need not be farther behind than the troops that come up at the double; in short, you are your own master, free to come and to go, without the everlasting incubus of impedimenta and belongings on your mind. But the plan has disadvantages which experience teaches more than outweigh the pleasures. The information which reaches an unattached man is scanty and often inaccurate; a day comes when a gallop is worth anything, and then you miss a horse, and swear to forego gipsying.

Just at dusk on the 11th I strolled up the market-place of St. Avold, opposite to the Post. At an open window, looking down on the busy throng of his soldiers, sat King Wilhelm. The old man was alone; his chin was in his hand, and one could read in the abstraction of his glance that his thoughts were far away. Next morning I saw him under a different guise. For two hours and more he stood in the market-place, close to the road that bisects in its midst. By his side was von Moltke—gaunt, thin, shaggy, wiry. Close behind stood Bismarck, seemingly as ready to fight as to make a fool of Benedetti in diplomacy. A few general officers stood around, but there was no semblance of a staff, nor anything like a guard or escort. The Father of his people is a homely man. Interspersed among the generals were the gamins of St. Avold, staring up with eyes of wonder at "*le Roi Prussien.*" A private soldier, in his shirt-sleeves, carrying a loaf in his hand, all but floured his Majesty's elbow, and others stood around, forming a close circle behind the generals. But if King William was homely in his immediate surroundings, those who stood by him were spectators with him of a sight that well might make his cheek flush with pride and emotion.

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For during the two hours that the King stood on this market place there ceased not to stream past him the army of which he is the chief. Now it was a regiment of white-coated, steel-breasted cuirassiers that came on stately, the ground shaking under the tramp of the great horses as the air vibrated to the sound of the mighty cheer from the deep-chested men. Then a regiment of infantry, three battalions strong, each with its band playing at its head, the men marching eight abreast, and already seasoned by the march and the bivouac, looking fit to do anything and go anywhere. The cheering of the passing troops was always hearty, but it rose to a shout of proud joy as the regiments came by with ranks already thinned by the desperate storm of Spicheren, and when the King with a wave of his hand saluted them with the cheery, "Morgen, Knappe Jungens!" Hussars, Uhlans, horse artillery, diversified the dense masses of infantry, and so thoroughly serviceable did all appear in every respect, that it would be invidious to comment in particular on the appearance of any. With all the field-officers the King shook hands and exchanged a few words, but he seemed best pleased to look into the enthusiastic faces of the men—his "Kinder"—as they passed. King as he is, he is none the less the soldier. It amused me greatly to hear him reprove a man for being out of step, and another for having his zündnadelgewehr on the wrong shoulder. No one would have imagined that the upright form and square shoulders carried the load of seventy-three winters.

It is impossible to imagine an army travelling with greater swiftness, and leaving fewer traces behind it, than the Prussian army invading France. The reserve was in Forbach; the army in St. Avold and beyond. For miles between the two places the road I traversed was as clear

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as in the quiet days of peace. The wave of war had passed, and hardly left a trace behind. The crops were unharmed in the fields on either side of the road, save in the spots where there had been bivouacs on the previous night; not a soldier or a mark of warfare was visible. Between Saarbrück and St. Avold I saw only two dead horses by the wayside, notwithstanding that some of the waggons had journeyed from near Berlin. If any men had fallen out footsore they must have been brought on somehow, for there were no stragglers. The stores were all close up, and the commissariat now in full working. It was a great catch for the Prussians to have captured at the Forbach station some two million thalers worth of French stores, of which a depot had been formed there.

Our tramp of the 12th was to Marange, a squalid village to the northern front of Falquemont, near which the King had his head-quarters for several days. We were pushing on after Steinmetz, knowing something of the dash and daring of that seasoned old warrior. Everybody was asking what could have become of the French army, thirty thousand men of which passed through Marange in headlong retreat the day but one after the battle of Spicheren. It was noted that there was hardly a foot of ground between St. Avold and Marange that might not have been held to advantage against an invader. St. Avold itself stands in the throat of a gullet. On the Metz side of it the valley opens out into a fine plain with a large château on a mamelon in its centre, a noble key to a splendid position, and behind, shutting in the valley from the French side, swells a great sloping ridge from the summit of which artillery might have operated with overwhelming advantage. Between Marange and Bionville another great hog-backed swell, the *beau ideal* of a battle position for

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the resistance of invasion; but it was crowned by Prussian bivouacs, and the French,—well, when you asked anybody in authority where they were, he would give a laugh and a little nod, and ask you for a light for his cigar.

From a hut in Marange to a château in Bazoncourt, a village a little behind Courcelles, and on the northern side of the little river Nied, was our experience of the 13th. Here Bazaine had had his head-quarters for a day or two, when he was sent forward with the 3rd French corps to attempt the rallying of the fugitives from Spicheren. By this time, the 13th, we had gained one of the central divisions of Steinmetz's army, and that commander himself was expected to occupy rooms for the night in the château of Bazoncourt, where meanwhile the officers of a dragoon regiment had located themselves. This château, the property of a certain Baron de Courtier, was a fine specimen of a French country house. The reception rooms were fitted up with great splendour in the Louis Quatorze style. They had been left just as they were occupied by the family, and the half-finished sketches and dainty needle-work of the young ladies were lying about just as they had been dropped when the route came for the retreat to Metz. Upstairs were long corridors, off which opened any quantity of bed rooms, all left in trim order, and between the snowy sheets of which dragoon officers, weary from frequent bivouacs, had stretched their weary frames the previous night. Bric-à-brac clocks, bijouterie, and all manner of tasteful nick-nacks adorned the pretty chambers; in one hung a watch, which its owner had left behind in his or her hurry. The corridors were hung with old family pictures, portraits of men in armour, gaunt and sinewy with the training that won them renown in the tournament—with chevaliers with elaborately curled hair hanging over their shoulders, ruffles

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and frills of Valenciennes lace, court swords, and jewelled snuff-boxes. And the gallery of female portraits was equally rich, from the straight-robed lady of the old régime to the luscious dame, all powder and patches, of Louis the Great, and the sprightly damsel of the Regency. The library door stood open, and a volume of Thomas Carlyle's "Life of Cromwell" lay open side by side with a French translation of one of James's novels. I wrote a letter at a desk at a window in the corridor, in the interior of which I found a family album, a bundle of maps and guide-books—the relics of a family tour through Switzerland,—and a quantity of exercises in English, presumably by the young ladies, corrected by the pencil of the governess. At the rear of the château was a beautiful garden, adorned with flowering annuals, trailing sprays of fuchsias, and greener grass than I had hitherto ever seen in France; and in pretty retreats were rustic seats and fantastic tables.

When the Baron and his family ran away—a very foolish thing for them to do by the way, for they would have received no annoyance—they had the civility to leave behind them a neat assortment of the ugliest old cook-women it has ever been my lot to see, who did their best to provide for the wants of all comers. The Baron owned all the fertile and warm vineyards that slope upward from the village, and he housed the vintages underneath his château and the esplanade behind it. I found that the quartermaster of the dragoons had administered to the keys of the cellars, from the stores of which he doled forth bottles on properly vouched application. To my solicitation he replied by a bottle of white wine and a bottle of red wine, along with which my companion and myself retired to a shady arbour, and cordially drank the health of the Baron and all his

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house. He could not have been a bad man, his wine was so good.

At Bazoncourt we were within twelve miles of Metz. The 12th Regiment of Dragoons had scouted the same morning to within sight of Forts St. Julien and Queleu, and had left videttes to observe the doings in the vicinity. The universal belief was that the French were in position to defend the passage of the Moselle between Metz and Pont-à-Mousson. The centre of their position was set down as being somewhere about Noveant, nearly midway between Pont-à-Mousson and Metz. Steinmetz on the right, Prince Frederick Charles was in the centre, and his head-quarters on the 13th were at Nomeny, considerably to the south of us. The Crown Prince, pushing on from Wörth, was on the extreme left, and rather in the rear, heading right on Nancy. It was expected that there would be a gradual concentration of the widely opened-out front, consequent upon exact knowledge of the French dispositions, and of the locality in which they might have made up their mind to offer battle. The soldiers of Steinmetz were thoroughly confident of victory. They had respected—and perhaps half feared—the French till they tested their calibre on the heights of Spicheren. Since then they made somewhat light of them; and as they penetrated farther and farther into the French territory, asked each other with raised eyebrows, whether a French host could have penetrated thus far into Rhineland without fertilizing the vineyards with its blood.

We missed seeing the battle of Courcelles, baulked by that over-eagerness which so often defeats itself. In the absence of good staff information, and judging solely, therefore, from regimental gossip, which it may be taken as an axiom is never reliable, we came to the conclusion that the impending battle must be fought more to the

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south. Early on the morning of the 14th—oh, that we had been less impatient!—my companion and myself, having determined to make towards the centre of the army of advance, quitted Bazoncourt in a south-westerly direction, and walked across the front, keeping at first as close as possible in the track of a party of dragoons, which the day before had marched from Bazoncourt toward Nomeny. Guided only by a rough chart, and destitute of a compass, we found ourselves in what may be called the debateable land between the German advance and the Moselle, to the south of Metz. So long as we were in the track of the dragoons we passed through the frequent villages without molestation, and, indeed, experienced a certain grumpy civility; but when we got into the terra incognita beyond, black looks everywhere met us from the French villagers. Towards midday, getting hungry, we asked a patriarch in a village through which we passed if he could put us in the way of getting any food. Rather sulkily he asked us in, and gave us some sour bread and hard-boiled eggs. As we were consuming this fare he left us, and only returned in order to obtain payment. When we recrossed his threshold we found waiting for us what I suppose was the able-bodied adult population of the village, consisting of about half-a-dozen young men and two hobbledehoys. One of them, acting as spokesman, inquired our business, muttering charges of our being Prussians and spies. I tried hard to explain to them that we were in the extremest sense of the word non-combatants, showing them a tiny penknife as the most lethal weapon I carried; but they continued to crowd around us threateningly, and I thought for sure every minute they would close. We edged towards a wall, so as to have them only on one side, and then my companion giving the

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word suddenly altered his tone, and peremptorily ordered them to clear the road. One hulking fellow would not give back, whereupon my friend let fly a straight right-hander from the shoulder that knocked the Frenchman backward into his patrimonial dunghill. The thoroughness and rapidity of the act seemed to dumbfounder his comrades, and we were out of the village before they recovered themselves.

Reaching the village of St. Jure we once more fell in with the spiked helmets, and remained there for the night. In the still night watches we heard the distant din of the artillery fire with which the battle of Courcelles was concluded, and in the morning came scrappy tidings of the bloody victory.

Although I was not a spectator of the battle of Courcelles (or Borny, as the French and indeed some of the Germans call it), I may give a brief sketch of the character of the operations. The German leaders had reason for believing, what we afterwards know was the case, that Bazaine, who had got the command of the French "Army of the Rhine," was proceeding to attempt the withdrawal of his army from Metz, with intent to retire upon Châlons and form a defensive junction with MacMahon. Weighing him in their own scales, it seemed clear that if he were to put this design into practice with energy and promptitude, he must gain such a start as would frustrate the intended strategetical movement on the part of Prince Frederick of swinging round by the south on the ground beyond the Moselle, and blocking Bazaine's paths of retreat. This was to be baulked at any cost, and the sluggishness of the French general gave Steinmetz an opportunity of which he was not slow to avail himself. There seems no reason to doubt that Bazaine might have marched clean away, if he had but realised the urgency

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of the necessity, without troubling himself about a strong rear-guard, when he had such a fortress as Metz to cover his retreat. In truth, Bazaine does not seem to have left the corps of Decaën, Ladmirault, and Frossard in the camps where Steinmetz found them, out of any solicitude for the safety of his rear, but simply because he had let his front get clogged in the passage of the Moselle, and was not impressed with the necessity of clearing his feet and getting away quickly from what afterwards proved his prison-house. The fact that on the 14th he fought when he need not, and indeed ought not, is strong proof that he did not realise his position. Had he done so, it would appear that his policy was, instead of trying to hold the line by Nouilly, Montoy, Colombey, and Mercy le Haut, to get his three corps back under the shelter of the forts of Metz, bustle them over the river and set them to keep the passage of the stream on the south of Metz. Steinmetz could have taken nothing by boring that bullet-head of his against Fort St. Julien or Fort Queleu. His direct march would have been arrested by the stone and iron in his path, and he must have diverged either north or south. The northern route would have been too circuitous, and have disconnected him too far from Prince Frederick Charles; if he had chosen the southward, he would have had to fight for the crossing with Bazaine's rear-guard, while the mass of the army of the latter, escaping the too tardy grapple of Prince Frederick Charles, would have been far on the road toward MacMahon. But everything seemed to work together for the advantage of the German arms. The three rearward French corps Steinmetz found in their camps; he asked them to give them battle that so he might gain time for Prince Frederick Charles, and with chivalrously blind simplicity they complied. They

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occupied the line of villages I have named, covering Metz to the eastward, when Steinmetz's reconnaissance beat up their quarters. The position, with which I had occasion afterwards to become familiar, presents many advantageous features, but is faulty in a military sense by reason of the abundance of cover for an approaching enemy, and of the number of excellent roads at his service for bringing up his forces in parallel columns. The French front and flanks were studiedly covered with numerous rifle-pits and trenches. Steinmetz's attack did not begin till shortly before four o'clock in the afternoon. It was initiated by the 1st division (Bentheim) belonging to the 1st Army Corps, which had joined Steinmetz since Spicheren; and by the 26th brigade (von der Goltz) of Glümer's division (the 13th) belonging to the 7th Army Corps. There were strong supports belonging to the 1st and 7th corps behind, about Pange, Domangeville, and Frontigny. The 26th brigade began the attack on Colombey, while Bentheim's men farther to the north pressed up the Saarbrück-Metz chaussée, deploying when at the hamlet of St. Agnan on the vineyards toward Flanville against Montoy and the ravine of La Planchette. The French were so strong on the slopes and in the woods about their position that the German infantry could make no headway, and lost heavily, experiencing, too, now for the first time a foretaste of the idiosyncracies of French fortress guns. Infantry supports came up, but the Colombey-Montoy position was defended with great obstinacy and could not be forced. After the infantry had been engaged without effect for some hours, the horse artillery were galloped up and came into action on the plateau near Noisseville, close to the brewery, with which the siege of Metz made us so familiar, and looking down upon Montoy from the north-east. There were no fewer

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than fourteen batteries in position between Noisseville and Flanville, and before the fire from eighty-four cannon the French began to break and give ground. Then the infantry of Bentheim and von der Goltz took advantage of the opportunity, but encountered a warm resistance, and had to fight for every fragment of ground they gained, losing, of course, very heavily. At seven o'clock further supports came up; Pritzelwitz with his fresh 2nd division, eager to back up his countrymen of Bentheim's division, and Kamecke with his 14th division, weakened already by the fight of Spicheren, but ready as it had been then to be in the thick of it. Thus the 1st and 7th corps were complete, and drove the French in toward Borny, Vantoux, and Mey. The French right at Mercy le Haut was crushed through an instrumentality that owed its presence to the fact that artillery fire makes a noise. Had air-guns been in use instead or fulminating powder, von Wrangel, marching his 18th division leisurely toward the Moselle, in the southern rear of the battle-field, would not have heard the cannon thunder. His division, forming part of the 9th Army Corps (Manstein), had only crossed the frontier a day or two before, and it belonged to the army of Prince Frederick Charles. But the cannon thunder intuitively turned Wrangel to the right, and about seven o'clock he turned up at Mercy le Haut, and set about throwing back the French right wing. Just before dark the French of Ladmirault's corps made a strong rally, attacking Wrangel vigorously by Grigy, while they staggered Bentheim on the north and even made him temporarily give ground in the direction of Noisseville and Servigny. But the attempt only caused further bloodshed. The Germans braced themselves up, fresh supports came, and after a fight which lasted long after dark, the proximity of the forts alone compelled the

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Germans to desist from driving the French farther. As it was, perhaps they came too close to the inanimate defences. There are German graves of the 14th August nearer to Queleu and les Bottes than prudence would seem to warrant; but men flushed with victory are not always wise. The German loss was between 2000 and 3000, and over 4000 wounded French prisoners were taken.

Soon after leaving St. Jure in the morning, we encountered a large body of German troops in full advance toward the Moselle. Accompanying it was the head-quarter staff of General von Alvensleben, from some members of which we learned that the Moselle bank was undefended by the French, and that the Third Army Corps, of which von Alvensleben had the command, was marching straight on Pagny to pontoon the stream near that point, and, crossing, strive to catch up with the left flank of Bazaine, who had that day quitted Metz on his march towards Verdun. Receiving permission to accompany the advance, we therefore went on to a village called Seligny, where the staff located itself in a handsome château with charming grounds surrounding it, and the troops bivouacked in the neighbourhood. At first it seemed as if the halt was but for a few hours during the heat of the day, and that the march would be resumed in the afternoon; but other troops continued to arrive, and then we were given to understand that there was to be a halt in Seligny for the night. We knew that troops had already crossed the Moselle at Pont-à-Mousson, which is about midway between Metz and Nancy, and the idea of being kept pottering behind was very disagreeable. So we parted company from General von Alvensleben and his staff, and made rapid tracks for Pont-à-Mousson. In an intermediate valley we passed

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through a large bivouac, chiefly of artillery and medical staff. Then we climbed a long vineclad ascent, and on reaching its summit there lay stretched at our feet the beautiful valley of the Moselle, with the broad stream in its bosom, and the white chateaux on the farther slope, glancing brightly from the rich green ground of the vineyards. On the left the grim old ruin of the Castle of Mousson frowned from the top of its precipitous rock—a gaunt skeleton of ancient war, looking down upon modern war. Under its shelter lay the town of Pont-à-Mousson, developing itself from the distance where we stood chiefly in church spires and barrack roofs, and along the valley directly below us ran the broad chaussée from Metz to Nancy. We found Pont-à-Mousson crammed with German soldiers. It occupies both sides of the river, connected by the quaint old bridge, which in ancient times was one of the keys by which France was wont to unlock the door that opened up the passage through Lorraine into Germany. Over the river and we were in France proper—no longer in German Lorraine, which every true Frenchman considers but a bastard Frankland. The triangular Place we found packed full of troops of all arms. There runs round it a piazza, such as we may see in Covent Garden, and this piazza was bedded with straw, and formed one vast couch for I cannot tell how many soldiers. Prince Frederick Carl had been in Pont-à-Mousson the night before, but had already gone forward. The Pont-à-Mousson people were very sombre, yet they kept their shops open and did their best to reap a good harvest, accepting German money as if it had been their currency from time immemorial. The first intimation they had that things were not prospering with France had been in the shape of a vast train of hospital-carts laden with wounded, which passed through the

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town on the 11th. The poor wounded were in a fearful state, many of them were weeping, and all utterly despondent and prostrated. Next day a detachment of about forty Prussian Uhlans had galloped into the valley and begun to tear up the railway between Metz and Nancy, and to cut the telegraph. An official wired their presence to Metz, and brought a squadron of the Chasseurs d'Afrique on their grey Arab stallions down from Metz at the gallop. They did the distance—about fifteen miles—at hunting pace, surrounded the Uhlans while engrossed at their work, and potted the lot with neatness and dexterity, being on their way back to Metz with their prisoners in less than half an hour. This was a very clever little exploit. Next day the Prussians had come in force and occupied the bridge, encountering no opposition. Since then the stream of arrivals had been constant. The little specimen which we experienced of the malevolence of the French civilians had, it appeared, been by no means isolated. We heard of a patrol, consisting of three men and a sergeant, who had been set upon by the inhabitants of a village on the French side of the Moselle, armed with pitchforks, and headed by the curé. They were all killed. The murderers were taken by another patrol, brought into Pont-à-Mousson, tried by a drum-head court-martial, and were lying under sentence of death. Another case was reported where two dragoons were poisoned in the quarters which they occupied in an outlying village.

Late the same afternoon, the 15th, my companion and myself quitted Pont-à-Mousson, and took the line of advance so well marked by a continuous stream of infantry, cavalry, artillery, and military train. We had been unable to obtain definite information as to the proposed scheme of action. But Frederick Charles himself,

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that hot-blooded man of war, had hours ago galloped out of the market-place of Pont-à-Mousson; and his was always a good line to follow; for sure as where the carcass is there the vultures are gathered together, so wherever there is the smell of powder burnt in wrath the Red Prince is not far off. When we reached the top of the heights fringing the western side of the valley of the Moselle, we found that the line of advance taken was not by the straight road that leads by Commercy to Bar-le-Duc, at which point the Marne comes nearest to the Moselle, but that it slanted away in a north-westerly direction in the direction, as it seemed, of Verdun, traversing a country consisting of alternate abrupt but inconsiderable elevations and narrow but not very deep valleys. As to the reason for this seeming detour from the straight clutch at the throat of Paris, it became obvious by-and-by. We passed several small villages, around which were great bivouacs; and about nine o'clock in the evening we reached the moderate-sized but very poverty-stricken town of Thiaucourt. It was teeming with troops. Entering a wine-shop close to a bridge at the end of the town nearest Pont-à-Mousson, we made some inquiries of the officers we found there as to the distance which the advance was ahead, and as to what was known of the French movements. They were fresh arrivals, and could tell us nothing except that they believed we must be close to the limit of the advance, for that the head-quarters of the leading division of the 10th Corps were in the town. As we were both fair walkers and the night was beautiful, and as Thiaucourt did not seem to offer many inducements in the way of accommodation, we determined to cover another five miles to the front, if we could get so far, before seeking the neighbourhood of a friendly camp-fire. So we started merrily up

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the crowded, narrow, and steep street of Thiaucourt. Not far from the top we came upon a few hand ambulances on which wounded men lay stretched. This indicated fighting no great distance off, for the blood on their bandages was still moist and fresh. Although we heard no firing, we made sure a night attack was in progress somewhere, and, by pressing on, that we should be able to see something of it. Just as we got to the top we passed a group of officers in earnest conversation, several of whom wore the provost-marshal or field-gendarmerie uniform. One of these abruptly and loudly challenged us, and demanded to know who we were. In reply to our explanations he only waxed wroth.

"Correspondents!" roared the angry man, "donner wetter, correspondents indeed! We want no correspondents here. Not a step farther do you go, and if I can do anything you will be sent back at once."

The man was too angry to be remonstrated with. Something before our rencontre with him had evidently disturbed his equanimity, and we were getting the benefit of his being out of temper. He confiscated our papers remorselessly, and as good as told us to go to the devil —at all events till the morning. Considerably chapfallen, we were slowly retracing our steps, with the intention of finding quarters somewhere, when we were again abruptly challenged by a still angrier man than the first. I fancy he had been sent after us by challenger No. 1. Anyhow, he did not wait for any explanation. We were coming from the direction of the French, and so—the sentence was concluded by a word of command to a party which was following, and we heard the nasty click of the bayonets as they were fixed and sent home in the socket. Our escort brought us to a large house which was the mairie of the town, and taking us up-

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stairs left us in the dark in a huge room, with a sentry standing over us. It seemed as if our apprehension had excited some interest, for officers often came to the door and peered in upon us through the gloom, but not one brought us tidings of release. Presently there came a trampling of feet on the staircase, officers rushed into the room with lights in advance of some stretchers, on which were wounded men, and we were informed that we were to be removed. We had hoped in our simplicity that we were pretty nearly in as bad case as might be, but we were to find out how rash was this conclusion. We were hurried across a passage, a door was opened, and we were thrust into a dark room, the floor of which was littered by prostrate Frenchmen. They were all civilians, who had been arrested on suspicion of being spies. The French idiosyncrasy does not develop itself in the direction of free ventilation, and our companions were singularly odoriferous, even for Frenchmen of the lower orders; it may be imagined, therefore, how abominably the place stank. We remonstrated energetically against being herded with spies, but the only indulgence we could obtain was in the shape of two chairs, whereas our companions had to sit on the floor,—at least I judged so, for it was too dark to see them. The room we were in was the Salle de Justice, and the table of the right worshipful mayor, and another one, which, I presume, was used by the Mr. Oke of Thiaucourt, stood on a dais inside a low railing. We took possession of this little platform, got a window open, sat down opposite to each other in our chairs, and simultaneously burst into a roar of laughter at the whimsicality of our position. But laughing, although pleasant exercise for the facial muscles, is not filling, viewed as a supper dish, and we had not eaten since midday. There was no

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prospect of release, and as little of anything to eat, so the next best thing was to sleep. My companion took the two chairs. I threw my knapsack on the boards as a pillow, pulled the baize covers off the tables, spread one of them below me, dragged the other over me, and we went to sleep. About midnight we were awakened and brought forth from our den. For my part I wished they had left us alone till morning, for the bitterness of death was past, and I was very comfortable between the mayor's table-covers. We were liberated, told to find quarters for the night if we could—the gendarme grinned a saturnine grin as he told us this—and instructed to call for our papers in the morning, when we should learn what had been determined anent us. At this untoward crisis an ancient Frenchman presented himself, and in reply to our question said he could accommodate us with a bed. I am bound to say that he fulfilled his promise. He did more. He gave us a bottle of vinegar which he called wine. His habitation was a single large room, with three or four mattresses strewed about the floor miscellaneously. On one of them I threw myself, my companion took another, and the old Frenchman set up a melodious snore on a third. In about an hour I awoke. Two cats were on my chest. I was positively overrun with vermin. On occasion I can manage to retain composure under the assaults of the small, lively, and saltatory species of animalculæ, but when it comes to an army of miscreants bearing the conventional name in England of a great ducal family, I am compelled to draw the line; so I got up and strolled out into the bright fresh dawn. Troops had been streaming through Thiaucourt all night, and they still came as if there were no end to them.

Early in the morning our friend the chief of the gen-

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darmes returned us our "legitimations," explaining that they were good only for Stülpnagel's division, not for the whole army of Prince Frederick Charles, and enjoining us strictly to return with all speed to Pont-à-Mousson, adding the cheerful observation that if he came across us again he would have us sent over the frontier under escort. We did indeed return to Pont-à-Mousson but having procured more comprehensive "legitimations" started off with all speed for Gorze.

In Gorze on Tuesday night nobody thought of bed. The hale were hurrying to the front; the doctors, the medical volunteers, and the sisters of mercy were tending the wounded everywhere. Every room was full, straw was shaken down in the streets by the sides of the houses, and wounded laid upon it. A huge convent, like one of those mills you see in Lancashire and Yorkshire, was packed full to its uttermost recess; from every window streamed a blaze of light. The whole town had a weird, lurid aspect. Candles were being burnt on the window-sills to light the troops on to the battle-field and the wounded off it; a babel of tongues raged in its narrow streets; it was impossible to avoid the feeling of nervousness such as one experiences when the air is charged with electricity just before a thunder-storm.

My companion and myself devoted ourselves to tend the wounded in one wing of a large hotel. They lay much as they had been brought in; their wounds had been bandaged in the field, and their time had not yet come for a second visit from the doctor. Three lay stretched on a billiard-table; the blood accumulated in the bed of the table till it began to ooze through the boards and drip on to the floor. Of nine in one small room, to whom we last gave water at midnight, three were dead by five in the morning. We left the poor

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fellows at six; two sisters of mercy had undertaken them by that time.

A great battle had been fought, perhaps the most stubborn fight of all this bloody campaign. Of 80,000 Germans engaged 18,000 were *hors de combat*, a proportion unequalled in modern European warfare. And it had been scarcely a victory for the German armies; it had been only not a defeat and a contribution toward the victory which it was hoped would follow. Vionville was no battle the plan of which was sedulously devised beforehand; there was no making of skilful dispositions with a keen eye to contingencies. It was simply a furious fight into which regiments, brigades, and divisions precipitated themselves as they came up, sure that they could not do wrong if they could but find an enemy and fasten upon him. Nor was an enemy hard to find or easy to cope with. You will not find a German who fought at Vionville but will frankly acknowledge that. He owns to you, with a shudder of recollection, how even was the balance for hours, and how his countrymen thought not of turning it in their favour, but would have been glad of the assurance that the beam would not kick the other way. In so far as Vionville was decided at all, it decided the relative staying power of French and German soldiers. There was no question about the fighting, there was not a hair's breadth to choose between them there; but who could fight the longer, that was what Vionville tested. And Vionville, like Waterloo, gave men the belief that the side which did not lose could fight for ever if need were. If further proof were wanting that Bazaine had no comprehension how gravely his situation was compromised, it is to be found in the fact that he could not have scouted the ravine of Gorze or the region to the south of it. If he had done so on the 15th he

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would have found it swarming with the ever-vigilant cavalry of Rheinbaben's division, which actually on the night of the 15th had indeed as good as turned his front, for it bivouacked at Xonville, some distance on the south-west of Mars la Tour. In utter blindness Bazaine blundered out of Metz in the course of the 15th, and composedly halted for the night when he had got about nine miles on his road. It becomes necessary to give a brief topographical sketch of the locality to aid in the understanding of the events of the next three days. The terrain to the west of Metz is rolling, broken in places with ravines, studded with forests, interspersed with open fields, numerous villages, and frequent farm-houses. It is intersected by three roads leading westward. Of these the most northerly quits Metz by Woippy, and strikes away by St. Privat la Montagne and St. Marie-aux-Chênes to Brie and the valley of the Meuse. The central and southern roads are one as far as the village of Gravelotte, where the former one goes away in a north-westerly direction to Conflans and Estain. The most southerly of the three goes on due west toward Verdun, threading on it successively the villages of Rezonville, Vionville, and Mars la Tour. This is the most direct road to Verdun, but there is no want of cross-roads to facilitate access thereto by the others, and the way by the central road is little less direct than that by the southern. Before reaching Gravelotte the conjunct chaussée, after coming out of the valley of the Moselle by Longeau and Roserieulles, crosses the table-land surface of a rounded ridge, known as the plateau of St. Hubert, and turning sharp at the Point du Jour, plunges down into an abrupt and narrow ravine with closely-wooded banks, and in whose bed runs the little stream of the Mance. This ravine is prolonged less markedly further north, and may

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be said to partition off the plateau of St. Hubert from that of Gravelotte. The latter is a model battle-plain of the old pattern, when it was a large army that had a frontage of a mile and a half. From the brink of the ravine it rolls backward in undulating downs at least as far as Mars-la-Tour, bare of trees or obstructions right and left of the chaussée, which runs along its centre, for a breadth varying from two miles to a mile and a half. It is flanked on the north by scattered patches of forest, on the south by a continuous forest under various names, which clothes the rugged slopes of the ravine of Gorze, and crops up upon the plain, in places encroaching not a little distance on the plateau. Reckoning from Metz, the first forest bears the name of the Bois de Vaux. It clothes the Moselle-ward slopes of the plateau of St. Hubert, and terminates in the ravine of Gravelotte. On the opposite side of this ravine begins the Bois des Ognons, which intrudes on to the plateau to the south and south-west of Gravelotte, and stretches westerly to a little stream that comes down into the ravine of Gorze nearly south of Rezonville. Farther westward on the slope is the Bois de Vionville, and north of it, in the direction of Rezonville, the Bois de St. Arnould. On the plain to the south of the chaussée, between Rezonville and Vionville, is the hamlet of Flavigny; farther west, and also south of the chaussée, are the villages of Tronville and Puxieux. Northward of Vionville, in the triangle between the central and southern chaussées, are the villages of Bruville and St. Marcel. Farther north still, on the central chaussée, is the village of Doncourt.

Bazaine on the 15th had marched by both the central and the southern chaussées. For the night the corps of Le Bœuf, of Ladmirault, and of the Imperial Guards had their camps, the first on the central chaussée about Jarny,

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the second in Doncourt, and the third in St. Marcel. The corps of Canrobert and of Frossard, taking the southern road, had halted in Rezonville, Vionville, Flavigny, and Tronville, with advanced guards westward as far as Mars-la-Tour.

After all his efforts, as it seems, the French had the heels of Prince Frederick Charles. It appears certain that the German leaders had made their calculations on the basis of a battle to take place on the 17th, and there were indications that such was expected to be joined farther to the westward than the terrain on which the battles of Vionville and Gravelotte were fought. Why, else, had the 19th Division, the first over the Moselle been sent on the 15th so far away due west as Thiaucourt, seeing that, in the actual event, they had to sweep round on the enemy with a circuit surely unnecessarily large? Of the rest of the army nothing had crossed the Moselle on the night of the 15th save the 3rd Army Corps. Had I but been patient, and not mistaken Alvensleben's halt at Seligny for a night bivouac, I should have been in the front of the fray. For at nightfall Stülpnagel had put his division (the 6th) in motion, had crossed the Moselle, and by three in the morning stacked arms again with his advance guard at Onville on the south of Gorze. Note, that he also was heading due west, as if to march farther in that direction before the time should come for him to swing round on the enemy. Buddenbrock's 5th Division, with the Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin's 6th Cavalry Division, the force destined to open the ball on the 16th, had not crossed the Moselle till the early morning of that day.

The German cavalry never sleep. Probing about the front and flanks of the advance, the horsemen, under cover of the night, had discovered where Bazaine's left

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flank lay in fancied security about the terrain villages, and the information went to the rear, we may depend, with all the speed that zealous men and stout horses could compass. Alvensleben got the tidings first, and by 5 o'clock Buddenbrock was over the Moselle and hurrying toward Vionville by the Gorze road. Stülpnagel, too, had his bearings given him, and he also was heading now northward. But they were not to draw the first blood. "Boots and saddles" had sounded early that morning in Rheinbaben's cavalry bivouac in Xonville, and his squadrons riding northward had found the French outposts in Mars-la-Tour, and had engaged in a skirmish with them. What he saw there sufficed to convince him that time was precious. He sent word to Alvensleben of the urgency, and taking up his position to block the road while he could, held himself at Alvensleben's orders. There were other cavalry men already on the field by 8 o'clock. The Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin had trotted his division forward, and was already driving in the French foreposts from the wooded alleys of the Bois de Vionville when Buddenbrock climbed on to the plateau at nine and saw Flavigny and the enemy before him. But he was yet on the French left, even when he reached Tronville, and his place was on the chaussée to block the French from utilising it. His artillery came into action on the brow of a swell at Tronville, while the infantry got into formation with their faces now looking toward Metz. Then Alvensleben bade them go at the villages, and they went. What sort of fighting had been done before Flavigny and Vionville were carried, was only to be realised by those who saw the vicinity before the corpses were buried. One uses weak words when he writes that the potato gardens of Flanville were strewed with French and German dead. There were places where

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the corpses were piled one upon another till the earth could not be discerned for the number of her children that cumbered her bosom there in death. But carried at length were the villages, and now for the moment there was the strange spectacle of a single weakened division of Germans standing up alone on the plain against the whole French array. But not for long. The reserve artillery of the 3rd Corps rattled up from the Gorze ravine, and taking ground on the south-east of Flavigny, began pounding into Rezonville. Then trusty Stülpnagel made his proximity known, as his men, breasting the steep leading up from Gorze into the wood of Vionville, found enemies in there, and essayed to drive them out by the fire of the needle-guns. It was the wood of Spicheren over again. The French in Rezonville had awoke, and sent southward in the Bois a strong body of infantry, who occupied a position both commanding and important; commanding in that it was one of the chief keys to the plateau out of the ravine of Gorze, specially important in so far as that while it was held Buddenbrock was isolated and cut off from all supports, unless by a circuitous route. Stülpnagel had to leave right many a good man on the slope on the narrow forest road and in the scrub before he had tumbled the Frenchmen first out of the wood of Vionville, and then out of the wood of St. Arnould, and was free to place himself with his right flank with its back on the latter, his left touching and aligning with Buddenbrock's right in Flavigny. Stülpnagel had picked up by the way and brought on with him two errant battalions of the 10th Corps, under the command of Colonel Lyncker, which at a later period of the fight made themselves not a little useful.

It was neither a very brilliant position nor a very brilliant prospect. Here stood a single Army Corps,

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slantingly athwart the plain, its right clinging to the wood of St. Arnould, its left away in a north-easterly direction, grappled upon Vionville as on a sheet anchor; for was not Vionville the foothold it had achieved on the great Verdun chaussée? Against this left, clung to so limpetlike, and against the whole attenuated line aslant of the plain, the French projected themselves with excessive fury over and over again. The hours passed, and still there came no assistance. Vionville had been carried before eleven, and now it was past one. It had been found necessary to interpose the cavalry as a buffer between the French and the exhausted infantry men. Rheinbaben, if there were terrible odds before him, saw also before him the sight so dear to a cavalry soldier, a noble stretch of charging ground. He was not slow to make the most of it. Again and again his horsemen dashed themselves against the French masses. Once they galloped so far that men said afterwards they had got to sabring the mitrailleuse gunners that plied their work on the chaussée before Rezonville. It was the sight of the war to have seen those cavalry charges on the day of Vionville—work of which this I now write of was but a mere episode, gallant and useful as it was. Necessity has no law, but the general must be in sore case indeed who is forced to dash cavalry again and again into the faces of serried files of infantry men handling a weapon like the chassepot. Who shall wonder that when the drafts were sent for to fill up the gaps in Rheinbaben's squadrons, a thrill ran through the *Landleute* of the districts whence it is recruited, when the footing up of the requisition came to be known. But minutes were precious, and the devoted horsemen threw their lives away to gain them.

The most sustained and furious French attack that

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had yet been made, had been withstood with growing difficulty shortly before two o'clock, when Alvensleben became cognisant of a new and fearfully ominous complication. There were symptoms that he was about to be outflanked on his left. Hitherto he had been fighting only the corps of Canrobert and Frossard. But now came intelligence that the Imperial Guards were stirring in their bivouac in St. Marcel, and that the corps of Le Bœuf and Ladmirault were already on the heights of Druville, having marched southward from their encampments on the central chaussée about Jarny and Doncourt. Had they come thundering down on his left Alvensleben must have felt that all was over. The greater danger had to be met at the risk of the less. Hard as the struggle had been to maintain the continuity of the original line, it was necessary now to attenuate it still more. Buddenbrock was ordered to take ground farther to the north, and whereas till now his left flank had been on Vionville, it was now to hold his left flank, while with his right he did what he might to stay the avalanche threatening from the northward. It was well for him that at this pinch supports, fresh if scanty, came to his hand. The mass of the leading division of the 10th Corps, the 19th (Schwartzkoppen), marching from Thiaucourt in the early morning, had its direction given it on St. Hilaire, far away to the west of Mars-la-Tour. But one brigade of it, the 37th (Lehmann), diminished to four battalions by the abstraction of Lyncker's two battalions which Stülpnagel had already whipped up as he came to the battlefield, had fortunately a less circuitous route chalked out for it. Its point was Chambley, to act in support of Rheinbaben, and it came very opportunely to Buddenbrock's hand in the emergency in which he now found himself. Into the forest north of Vionville he had already

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plunged the 24th Regiment, and now he was able to strengthen this slender force with Lehmann's battalions. The forest fighting was desperate and long, but the Germans managed to hold their ground till more assistance came in the shape, first of the reserve artillery of the 10th Corps which went into action at once, followed about four o'clock by the bulk of Schwartzkoppen's division. Soon after came hurrying up the 20th Division (Kraatz-Koschlau) which had followed the 19th from Pont-à-Mousson to Thiaucourt, but instead of making the circuit by St. Hilaire had struck straight from Thiaucourt to the battlefield by Chambley. These reinforcements enabled head to be made against the attacks from the north, and baulked for the time Le Bœuf's flanking movement. Kraatz-Koschlau could even spare some three battalions to strengthen Stülpnagel, who was staunchly holding his own on the right flank.

But to follow the incidents of the northern attack I have somewhat anticipated the events about what was now the German centre, the vicinity of the great southern chaussée. Of its weakness in infantry the French took ready advantage. An old Roman road runs nearly parallel to the chaussée some distance northward of it, and utilising it the French had got into position near it about midway between St. Marcel and Vionville, a large force of artillery. These batteries were doubly hurtful. They enfiladed the struggling infantrymen in the wood to the west, trying to stay the progress of Le Bœuf, and they fired southwards upon the German batteries by Vionville, which were embarrassed in replying to them because of the urgency of the requirement for their firing eastward toward Rezonville to keep in check the French infantry which was threatening the German centre. Becoming audacious in discernment of the double advantage of

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their position, the French got up more guns to the southward of those near the Roman road, till at length there was a convex formation of batteries stretching down on to the grassy swell on the north-west of Rezonville. By what agency soever, it behoved Alvensleben to interfere with the ruinous practice these were making on his centre, and at least to check their progress, for in very truth, backed and flanked by infantry, they were echeloning an advance right into his centre, making as if to cut him in two. He had no infantry wherewith to arrest this movement, so ominous of evil: his artillery was overmatched. There was nothing for it but to save his continuity at the cost of his cavalry. While the horsemen were sacrificing themselves, supports might come up to strengthen the centre; at all events time would be gained, and time in such a strait was everything. His Nolan galloped to Bredow, the commander of the 12th Cavalry Brigade, and bade that officer to charge the batteries in his front. Our own Light Brigade accepted not more cheerfully a kindred task than did Bredow's dashing horsemen. Surely it is beseeming to name the regiments to whom fell this forlorn hope of cavalry service. They were the 7th Cuirassiers, the 16th Uhlans, the 13th Dragoons. Up the gentle slope galloped gaily on Bredow's devoted kinder, the French batteries belching death into their faces, the French infantry, from the intervals between the guns and the batteries, pouring into them a hail-storm of chassepot bullets. Full many were the graves that had to be dug on that grassy slope afterwards; but the brigade, what of it was left, was among the guns and sabring the artillerymen before the latter, standing up to their work to the last, had time to seek safety in flight. Aye, and they were not content with carrying the battery, but, riding through them, went straight at the infantry beyond.

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On a house in Le Bourget, when retaken by the Guards, there was noticed the inscription,—"Prussians, you shall never see your wives more." The legend might have been borne on the banners of those French columns against which Bredow's brigade was dauntlessly charging. "Nobly they rode and well," but the bullet-storm in their teeth was too strong for them. They had to turn their backs upon it and ride back whence they had come, such of them as had stood up against it. It was the smaller half of the brigade that formed line again in the old position by Vionville.

This sacrifice, however, gave at least a temporary check to the pressure on Alvensleben's centre; but still a fresh access of danger had developed itself on his left. Pressed by the French Guards from St. Marcel, the soldiers of Kraatz-Koschlau, Schwartzkoppen, and Lyncker, who were prolonging the German left flank to the northward of Buddenbrock, had to turn their faces eastward, and fight as best they might against the repeated attacks made from that point of the compass. Meanwhile Le Bœuf, on the slopes of Bruville and extending farther west, was positioned right athwart their extreme left flank, and although he had been checked for a time, was now taking advantage of the engrossment caused to the Germans by the attacks from the east, not only to renew his from the north, but to deploy in a westerly direction, so as practically to sweep the German rear. To have suffered this evolution would have been destruction. Kraatz-Koschlau and Schwartzkoppen were up to the hilt already: to no man is it given, physically, to face two ways at once, and their faces were already set fast to the east. Cavalry, yet again cavalry, had to be resorted to. Who shall say, after Vionville, that more cavalry than is needed for outpost and despatch duties is a needless adjunct to a

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modern army? But for its strength in this arm, the night of the 16th of August would have closed upon the German army hurled back defeated into the ravine of Gorze. True, the cavalry was mercilessly used, if indeed abused is not the more appropriate word; but the crucial urgency of the exigency gave cavalry an opportunity to vindicate the perpetuation of its higher attributes as an arm of war in the face of the altered conditions of modern warfare. The general would be a reckless maniac who should teach himself to lean on his cavalry as an every-day and matter-of-course appliance for such purposes as those to which cavalry was put at Vionville; but the knowledge, based on what happened at Vionville, cannot harm him, that if he has a good and strong cavalry force, he has a reserve-buckler on which he may rely in the hour of need to postpone or avert an otherwise inevitable reverse.

Wedell's cavalry brigade from the 10th Corps was sent against Le Bœuf to charge the heights of Bruville, and ease the pressure on the left flank. It had a foretaste of what was in store for it when, as they passed Mars-la-Tour, the village shot up into lurid flames kindled by the French shells. French shells tore through its ranks as they rode up the open; French shells crashed into it when the inevitable halt and dislocation took place as the broken ground was reached. The brigade was the focus of a converging fire from the north and from the east. The chassepots and the mitrailleuses opened upon it as the horsemen struggled through the rocky underbrush that kept them at a walking pace, and made a mockery of formation. Can an infantry regiment, in full marching order, swim out to an iron-clad in the offing and carry her by boarding? The task is hardly less impossible than was that which the Wedells failed to

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accomplish. They came back "in bruchstücken" (in fragments), to quote the graphic words of an actor, and retrieved their formation behind the reserve artillery of the 10th Corps, which had come into action a little to the east of Mars-la-Tour. Flushed by the repulse of the cavalry, Le Bœuf's infantry assumed the offensive with greater audacity. Coming down due south with an extended front on Mars-la-Tour, the infantry stretched as far west as the farm of Greyères, while still farther west, near to Ville-sur-Iron, there rode five regiments of the cavalry of the Imperial Guard, the pick and pride of the French army, in whose long, straight rapiers was vested the guardianship of its right flank. This advance made untenable the position of Schwartzkoppen's regiments on the German left wing north of the chaussée. Already they had been assailed in front and on the flank; now there were troops actually in their rear marching along their backs. Voigts-Rhetz sent orders to Schwartzkoppen to extricate himself from a position so impracticable, and the manœuvre had to be effected by the co-operation yet again of cavalry. With Schwartzkoppen's 19th Division had come from Thiaucourt the Dragoon brigade of the Prussian Guards, consisting of the 1st and 2nd Dragoon Guards. They formed close columns of squadrons due north of the burning Mars-la-Tour, their faces northward toward Le Bœuf's infantry. Aligning with them on their left, and facing the cavalry of the French Imperial Guard, was Barby's brigade of the Division Rheinbaben; the 4th Cuirassiers, the 13th Uhlans, and the 19th Dragoons, strengthened by the 10th Hussars from Rheinbaben's other brigade, and by such of Bredow's 13th Hussars as the French shells and chassepot bullets had left fit for another charge. The Guards, whose charging ground was farther west than the broken country

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which had brought Wedell's brigade to grief, had a good stretch of fair swelling downs before them. Barby could not have wished a happier land whereon to test the question of superiority between German line cavalry and the picked horsemen of the French Imperial Guard. The Guards rode straight at Le Bœuf; one may be right sure there was no swerve in the gallop that brought Barby's men sword-point to sword-point with the French cavalry. Methodists are fond of propounding it as an axiom that a single charge is all that can be got out of cavalry in one day. Why, here were these troopers of the Prussian Guards dashing themselves again and again on the bayonets of Le Bœuf's masses, now recoiling before the gusts of chassepot firing, now rallying and charging in again as if each man had as many lives as there were pistol cartridges in his pouch, and he was determined to expend the ammunition of vitality. So long as martialism lives in the Fatherland, so long will this deed of *derring-do* on the part of the Prussian Dragoon Guards be cherished as one of the proudest memories of a campaign very fertile in such memories. As for Barby's brigade, it had work to its liking. Men can project from rapier blades no pale death in the shape of chassepot bullets. A cavalry fight is horse to horse, man to man, sword to sword; weight, valour, and skill give their owners something to show for their gifts. Long, confusing, and stubborn was the *mêlée*. One who looked on it from Mars-la-Tour told me that the simile which occurred to him as he watched was chaos in a state of fermentation. The fermenting chaos in time resolved itself into its constituent elements. One constituent element was galloping to the rear, the other was chasing it furiously; and the process of fermentation had precipitated an abundance of lees, which cumbered the

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ground whereon the chemical phenomenon had developed itself.

The diversion caused by these efforts of the cavalry enabled Schwartzkoppen to extricate himself from his critical position, and he retired till he had his back on the chaussée between Vionville and Mars-la-Tour, with strong artillery in his rear. Penetration further northward on the part of the German left wing was abandoned for the time, and the defensive strictly adhered to. To conclude the narrative as regards the left wing it may be stated, that soon after six o'clock Le Bœuf and Canrobert's corps, who had been comparatively quiescent since the retrograde movement of the Germans, reassumed the offensive in strong force. After some tough fighting this attack was repulsed, and then Kraatz-Koschlau and Buddenbrock, keen to utilise their opportunities, followed up the retreating Frenchmen and gained some new ground in the direction of St. Marcel and Bruville.

Stülpnagel's less eventful experiences on the German right must now be briefly alluded to. Owing to the French having chiefly concentrated themselves on the effort to break the centre and turn the left of their opponents, he was not exposed to very fierce assaults, and those which came against him he sturdily repulsed. But toward five o'clock it appeared to have struck Bazaine that he was permitting too great quietude to the German right. He sent out to the south a large portion of his reserve, consisting of the Infantry of the Guard, who, occupying the Bois des Ognons, came through the Bois de St. Arnould, and made a demonstration against Stülpnagel's right flank, which rested on that wood. But the cannon had not been thundering all day for nothing. Barnekow, with his 8th Division, had been at Frontigny, on the other side of the Moselle, at midday. By five

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o'clock his leading infantry brigade, and some batteries of his cavalry, were already in action. The latter came to strengthen Stülpnagel. By the orders of Prince Frederick Charles, who had reached the field at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the Brigade Rex, which was Barnekow's foremost contingent, came up the steep and plunged northward through the woods of Vionville and St. Arnould, with intent to take in flank the French Guard infantry, who were troubling Stülpnagel, and having thrown them back, make a demonstration against Vionville. This manœuvre was supported by the 49th Brigade, from the Hessian Division, under the command of Prince Louis of Hesse, the husband of our Princess Alice. It belonged to the 9th Corps, and had been sent on by General Manstein from Pont-à-Mousson at midday, in accordance with instructions from Prince Frederick Charles. The Hessians struck up from Gorze through the Bois des Chevaux into the Bois des Ognons, co-operating on the right with the Brigade Rex. Neither brigade was able to do much in the dense woods, now still further obscured by the growing darkness. The Brigade Rex did succeed in clearing the wood of St. Arnould, but could effect no demonstration in the open against Rezonville; the Hessians did not succeed in driving the French out of the Bois des Ognons on the right. While they were fagging and fighting in the twilight, a furious French cannonade broke out on the north, directed against the German right wing, under cover of which it was apparent that the French were falling back over St. Marcel and Druville, as was conjectured, to place themselves on the central chaussée, in final abandonment of the design of cutting their way through the obstacle on the southern. So far as was consistent with prudence, Rheinbaben's ever-handy cavalry strove to hamper their movement,

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and succeeded in cutting off some French prisoners in Rezonville. By nine o'clock the bloody battle-field was no longer vexed by shot or shell. The fighting men bivouacked in the tracks in which they had fought; the Krankenträger and ambulance people saw before them a task so stupendous that they might well stand aghast. It was with the wounded of Vionville that Gorze was ghastly on the night of the 16th of August.

I have said that there was no sleep for anyone in Gorze on the night of the 16th of August. All who were not otherwise engaged were busy among the wounded. But while the wounded groaned the leaders and the staff had to work, organise, direct; for the victory was not won yet by a great way. There was little access for outsiders to the busy bureau of Prince Frederick Charles; yet I got a glimpse of it through circumstances beyond my own control. While I was striving to soothe into an approximation of coherency the landlady of the hotel, who alternated between hysterics and vituperation of her species generally, a couple of field-policemen took it into their honest heads to regard me as a suspicious person, and forthwith conducted me to the bureau. While justifying myself, a process which was not so difficult as it had been the night before, I saw six orderly dragoons dispatched in as many minutes in as many different directions. There was no staff officer with leisure or inclination to enlighten a vagrant as to the dispositions in progress, but this much I gathered that there was urgent hurry for the bringing forward of every available man. What I learned then must be supplemented by later information.

It seemed a foregone conclusion among the Germans that they were in no case to resume hostilities on the 17th; nor did there seem much apprehension that the

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French could take the initiative. By the morning of the 17th there was every appearance that they had given up all hope of opening up the southern road, and had indeed drawn back materially from the position on the central road which they had held on the morning of the 16th. It was not, however, blocked to them save by detachments of German cavalry which patrolled it as far as Estain. The German forepost line established after the fight of the day before, extended from Ville-sur-Iron, north-west of Mars-la-Tour, in a slanting south-easterly direction across the plateau till it struck the head of the Bois de St. Arnould due south of Rezonville. The chain crossed the southern chaussée between Vionville and Rezonville, a circumstance showing how little ground the Germans had gained since the previous morning. All through the night and during the early part of the 17th, the several Army Corps were marching up and falling into the places arranged for them in the council of war, and in the bureau over-night. There was wonderfully little fuss and no confusion. Spicheren and Vionville had been battles of occasion, joined without premeditation or indeed expectation, and fought out as best they might, in what manner and with what material was most available in the exigency. The battle of the morrow was to be of another sort—one of the old formal set battles, in which generals were to play with divisions and Army Corps as with chessmen, were to elaborate combinations, to strike preconcerted blows, to put forth their genius, science, experience, and skill to gain the result they wished for. Not that the campaign had not earlier been fertile in evidences of the possession of these attributes by the men who directed the steps of the German armies. A master-mind shone in every detail of the plan, of which the battles of Spicheren and Vion-

ville, occurring when they did, were incidental excrescences, springing out of the pressure of a modification in the circumstances.

Bazaine, crippled as he was by the action of the 16th, could not, even supposing him tardily awakened to the danger of his position, have made an attempt at extricating himself on the 17th. Drawn back into a commanding position, with his right wing on Roncourt and above the precipitous ravines of St. Privat-la-Montagne, his centre on Amanvilliers, La Folie, and Leipsic, and his right on a natural fortress, the plateau of St. Hubert, with Moscow on the right of it, and Point du Jour on the left, and inclining backward over the ridge to the left rear at Rozerieulles and Jussy, he held a position of surpassing strength in itself, and wherein he was not actually debarred from getting on to the central road by Verneville and Doncourt, while with his right he kept open the northern road, emerging as it did from his position at St. Privat. Had he elected he might have marched by it on the 18th, and had a fair start of the Germans, whose nearest point before they moved on that morning was several miles south of the northern chaussée; but had he been ever so nimble he would have run a fearful risk of being taken in flank, and in the best event would inevitably have had his foes thundering on his rear by nightfall. Let those who blame him confine their strictures to his unaccountable sluggishness before the 16th. Let those who in cold blood urge that, *coûte qui coûte*, he should have cut his way through the Germans on that day, remember that in trying to do so he had exhausted all his available reserves, except a portion of Ladmirault's Corps. It was not in the nature of things that he could have moved before midnight of the 17th, and by that time the track he must have taken was

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scoured by German patrols quick to send back the tidings of his movement to the plateau of Vionville and Mars-la-Tour, by that time packed with German Army Corps which had not suffered as had he the day before. No, Bazaine was fairly out-generalled and out-manœuvred, and he accepted the inevitable, greatly as it was his own fault, with conduct and skill that to my thinking go some way toward redeeming his earlier mistakes. I have used the word inevitable, but there was one chance open to him, although a hazardous one, if he had been a man of prompt action. The Thionville road leading into the valley of the Meuse at Longuion was yet free from Prince Frederick Charles's éclaireurs. By leaving one of his corps d'armée in position about Amanvilliers and St. Privat with orders to hold its ground as long as possible, and make a demonstration as if with intent to use the northern road by Brie, falling back under the guns of Plappeville when it could keep up the delusion no longer, he would probably have gained a day's start before the Germans would have found out that his whole army was not still standing before them. But the risks of such an attempt are apparent when it is noticed that Prince Frederick Charles, had he been beguiled into spending the whole of the 18th fighting with a single French army corps, would on the 19th have still by the Brie road been equidistant from Longuion with Bazaine on his more circuitous route, supposing that the latter had made all possible use of his start. If we consider that Bazaine, not so much by his own fault as by the rottenness of the French system, or rather want of system, of obtaining intelligence, had no conception of the strength opposed to him, but on the contrary believed that on the 16th he had fought all the German troops that were available for the 18th, an additional reason is

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found for the line of action on which he determined, nor is there any occasion to inquire into the truth of the allegation that he felt himself not justified in quitting Metz in its then condition of imperfect defence. Abuse him for what we may, we cannot deny him the selection of a fine position on which to stand the impact of an attack in force. Its natural strength was worth to him at least an additional Army Corps. And he had strengthened the fortress with judicious outworks in the shape of strongly-held and carefully-fortified posts at St. Marie-aux-Chênes, Vernéville, Gravelotte, and in the Bois des Vaux. His whole front was studded with rifle-pits.*

Von Moltke and Prince Frederick Charles had imperfect knowledge of the dispositions just detailed. They could not assure themselves whether Bazaine had elected to stand and fight upon his ridges, or whether he would not rather dash out upon the northern road, offering battle as he came. It was necessary, therefore, to make dispositions to meet both contingencies; and since the latter contingency was the likelier, and, if it occurred, demanded the prompter dealing with, it behoved the German leaders to commence the game with special

* I observe it has been asserted that the French in those earlier battles did not resort to rifle-pits. Anybody asserting this who was in sight of the operations must have been stone-blind. I have been in dozens of them. The story of 800 and odd corpses having been found in one after the battle of the 14th of August must have been a "goak" perpetrated by some youngster on the staff eager to feed Germany with sensationalism. There were two varieties of what the Germans call schützen-graben. Of one the churchyard at Point du Jour is a good example —a triangle surrounded with a low wall, which had been loop-holed, and with a trench inside for additional cover. The other pattern consisted of a small half-moon excavation—the convexity toward the enemy—the earth from the hole breasted up in front, over which the marksmen fired in a kneeling position. The maximum garrison of one of these rifle-pits must have been about twelve men, half of them firing while the other half rested behind the shelter. To have packed throngs of men into large rifle-pits would simply have been to provide so many charnel-houses. Doubtless numbers of the little half-moons are still to the fore on the battle-fields. It is easy to tell the French works from the German by the objective of their convexity. The Germans, however, converted many of them.

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reference to that eventuality. The southern road was first of all to be securely blocked. That task was assigned to the 7th and 8th Corps of the 1st Army, the former lying in the western portion of the Bois de Vaux and the eastern portion of the Bois des Ognons, standing in fine due south from Gravelotte; the latter, touching the left of the 7th Corps, occupied the western part of the Bois des Ognons, the Bois de St. Arnould, and the Bois de Vionville. It stood south of Rezonville. Besides caring for the southern road, and occupying a useful position in view of a necessity on the part of the enemy for falling back on Metz, these two corps served as a kind of stationary anchor for the 2nd Army to sway from, or perhaps it would be a better illustration were I to liken them to the fixed pivot on which it was to swing round should events justify the movement. The 2nd Army had its front in a north-easterly direction, parallel with the line of the northern road, which was its first objective point, having relation to the contingency that Bazaine would attempt to march off thereby. This front was composed of, reckoning from right to left, first, the 9th Army Corps, which touched von Göben's left, and with the direction given it on Caulre farm; second, the Guards, direction Doncourt; third, the 12th Army Corps (Royal Saxons), direction Jarny. The second line was composed of the troops that had been so severely mauled on the 16th, viz., the 3rd and 10th Corps. The 4th Corps was on its way toward Toul; the 2nd Corps was not up, having only quitted Pont-à-Mousson early on the morning of the battle.

King Wilhelm had been on the field on the forenoon of the 17th, and before returning to Pont-à-Mousson, he had issued his formal orders for the morrow. Wellington himself could not have been more laconic or less

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devout. "The 2nd Army," so wrote Moltke in his master's name, "will, early in the morning, at 5 o'clock, commence operations and advance in échelon between Ville-sur-Iron and Rezonville. The 8th Army Corps will co-operate in this movement with the 2nd Army on its right. The 7th Army Corps will at first have the duty of covering the movement of the 2nd Army against any demonstrations on the part of the enemy from the side of Metz. The King's further orders will depend on the action taken by the enemy. Communications for his Majesty will next find him on the height south of Flavigny." Prince Frederick Charles, quitting Gorze, quartered himself for the night between the 17th and 18th in Buxières. He was stirring early. What a subject for a painter that morning gathering of the leaders of army corps by the poplar-trees between Vionville and Mars-la-Tour, with the Red Prince in their midst, brusque, curt, and emphatic! Around the group, conning over a new slaughter, lay the ghastly evidences of a past. Mild-eyed, handsome-faced Prince of Saxony; puffy, phlegmatic, *gros* August of Würtemberg; Alvensleben the aristocrat, with his thin clear-cut features and bright hawk eye; Voigts-Rhetz, with the shrewd, keen look of a lowland Scot; Manstein, grim, grey, and determined; Göben, of the massive head and thoughtful brow; these stand, in a roughly defined circle, with their horses' heads turned inward; and there addresses them in a few short crisp sentences, the tall square man on the powerful bay; he lets his hand drop on his thigh with an audible thud, for he is very heavy-handed in every sense, this stalwart man with the massive hair-clad jaw, the strong wide mouth, cruel in its set resoluteness when the features are at rest, the well-opened piercing eye under the splendid forehead, which, broad, square, and knotted above the

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eyebrows, soars inexplicably away into calm benevolence. A man this, in the tight red tunic, cast surely by nature in her special mould for a great military leader. You might think with yourself, as you looked at him, that you could not fancy him as a friend; look again, and I dare swear you will fancy him far less as an enemy. Nor is the Red Prince without friends, warm and jealous; if the women in the French villages use his name as the Scotch peasants of old did the name of the Black Douglas, to hush their babes wherewithal into awe-stricken silence, his army would die for him to the last man, and I have seen a pretty picture of bonny children climbing in loving trustfulness about the knees of the heavy-browed and heavy-handed man. He does not detain his generals long under the poplar-trees. One of them afterwards gave me his laconic parting words, "Your duty is to march forward, find the enemy, prevent his escape, and fight him wherever you find him." And Alvensleben the pious added in his quiet tones, "In the name of God," as the generals wheeled their horses outwards, and the little council scattered.

Modern battle-fields are not like cockpits. Were that a real battle which is ordinarily fought on Easter Monday on the Brighton Downs, the spectators, who squat and lunch placidly on the Red-hill, would find that commanding elevation very hot quarters. Generals, with the perversity of human nature, do not make the convenience of spectators the primary consideration in their dispositions, nor has any means yet been discovered to enable the spectators to circumvent the inattention to their convenience on the part of the military authorities, by being in more than one place at the same time. The science of expeditious and comprehensive war intelligence is still in its infancy. If the millennium does not inter-

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vene through the zealous efforts of the Peace Society, we may anticipate gigantic strides in this department of catering for the avidity of the public, culminating perhaps in opposition-balloons with a war correspondent in each hanging in the air over the centre of the battle-field, and having a "special wire," per favour of Mr. Scudamore, leading direct into each Foreign Editor's room. But such appliances are for posterity. In the late war, especially towards its commencement, the civilian spectator who was not fortunate enough to be attached to a head-quarters staff (and there were only three, I believe, to whom this well-deserved favour was accorded) had to be thankful for very small mercies indeed. I thought myself extremely lucky in not being interfered with when I took up what seemed an eligible position at the edge of the wood of St. Arnould, to the south of Rezonville. The forest land here throws itself up into a little elevation, affording some command of the rolling plateau to the north-eastward, with Gravelotte on its bosom, the ridge of St. Hubert and Point du Jour beyond, and away to the north on the horizon the bushy uplands of Vernéville, with the church spire showing above the trees; yet here, as it was not difficult to discern even at the time, and far more easy afterwards from sad *indicia*, it was possible to witness only one phase of the battle, and that neither the most critical nor the most decisive. I propose to narrate first the occurrences of which I was the eye-witness here on the southern edge of the field, and, having done so, to give then a short account of the more northern operations, from the official documents and other information I received afterwards from the Saxons and Guards, to whose share fell so much of the heavy fighting on the German left and left centre.

By half-past ten o'clock the 9th Corps was no longer

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visible on the plateau about Vionville. It had gone off on its northern march, and its place was occupied by the 3rd Corps, which swarmed all over the gentle swells and depressions. On the breast of the higher ground south of Flavigny there was a stationary group with led horses and mounted escort behind, the dead of the 16th flecking the ground all around. Orderlies and aides-de-camp galloped furiously from all points to this stationary group —galloped furiously from it north, east, and south. For here was the King; and here was von Moltke, with all the ends of that seemingly-tangled skein gathered inside that marvellous brain of his, behind the downcast inscrutable eyes. The 8th Corps, on the fringe of which I stood, was showing itself out of the wood, and feeling its way with no great decision apparently on to Rezonville, whence ran the straight chaussée eastward into Gravelotte, the southern outwork of the French front. There was little or no firing. Now and then came a shell from the French batteries about Gravelotte, tentatively as it seemed, to experiment as to the range, but the rare reports only served to accentuate the lurid lull before the breaking of the storm. The clouds presently clashed together, and the thunder rattled out, coming down clear and booming on the wind from the bosky coverts and the church spire of Vernéville. Nothing was to be seen save the bursting of an occasional shell on the slope, but the bickering volleys of musketry, giving the treble to the deep bass of the artillery, told in language that could not be misinterpreted how a hot and close fight must be going on out of our sight to the north. It was about half-past eleven when the air first began to throb with this din. Now it became apparent why the 8th Corps had been cropping out on the plateau toward Rezonville. By mid-day the heads of the columns of Weltzien's divi-

sion (the 15th) were pushing on north-easterly towards Malmaison and the Bois des Genivaux, to take up the alignment with the fighting further north. Barnekow's division (the 16th), on the right of the 15th, was pushing across the plain toward Gravelotte, in dense broad columns, already half-deployed into line. Now we in the south became familiar with artillery fire through another sense than that of hearing. The German batteries went to action from Bagnieux southward to the edge of the Bois des Ognons, pouring their fire into Malmaison, the wood of Genivaux, and the village of Gravelotte. Nor were the French slow to reply. It seemed as if the wood were one huge crater, which incessantly vomited projectiles that tore through the air and burst in the German ranks, strewing the plain with fallen men who were left behind unheeded as the columns pressed ever on. Gravelotte, too, was girt about with its zone of cannon and mitrailleuses, plied with assiduous industry by gunners who must have known what of advantage to the cause of France rested in their successful maintenance of the advanced position. The cannonade for long was a drawn struggle, neither side gaining much material advantage. But the slaughter of it was terrible, and the Germans out in the open must have lost the most heavily. How or when Gravelotte was at length taken I could not tell. There was a gradual collapse in the French artillery fire, a ragged deployment of their infantrymen in front of the village, a rush of Barnekow's men at the double, and a hellish mêlée of fighting that seemed as if it would last for ever. On the deadly furnace of battle the Germans perpetually piled fresh fuel. The Bois des Ognons emptied itself on to the plain into a fearful plunging fire from the French batteries on the heights of Point du Jour. The regiments struggled on through it

to precipitate themselves on Gravelotte; yet so fearful was the shell-storm that beat on the plain to the south of Gravelotte, between it and the woods, that the Germans had to swerve out from under it somewhat, making a circuit so as to fall upon the village from the west instead of the south. These were von Zastrow's soldiers of the 7th Corps. The Barnekows—whether it was they or the former who carried the village I know not—had slanted away further to the north-east toward the Bois des Genivaux, roughly aligning on its right with Weltzien's division. The French made a desperate stand in the wood, while by this time their batteries at the Point du Jour were firing furiously into Gravelotte—indication that it was no longer in French hands. I was told afterwards that the hither edge of the Bois des Genivaux was carried by von Göben's soldiers at the point of the bayonet, and that they had to push the French out of the wood by sheer bodily weight. Thus much was not apparent from my position, although I had improved it by coming up nearer the front; but there was no difficulty in discerning that the fighting was desperate and protracted. All the while the din was to be heard from the north out of the range of vision, but it seemed as if it were now further back, whence the hope became common that the Germans were faring somewhat better in the north than fortune suffered them to do in the south.

Yet in the south there were gleams presaging a victory to achieve which much had yet to be done. Von Göben had seemingly gained the wood, gaining thereby no respite from the persistent firing of the batteries at St. Hubert and Point du Jour. Von Zastrow, with intent as it appeared to give his friends of the 8th Corps some relief from this, had clothed the neighbourhood of Gravelotte, as soon as it was in German hands, with four

batteries from Kamecke's Division, but the reply to them was so strenuous that it seemed surprising how they were able to keep their ground, while the continuous explosion of shells in and about the Bois des Genivaux gave evidence that the 8th were still in purgatory. As it seemed in bitter chafing at their sufferings, ever and anon fierce attempts were made to crush the causes of them. Dimly and vaguely only could the movements be discerned from where I stood, but large detachments must have burst out of the wood, and pushing down into the dip where was the bed of the Mance, breasted the opposite slope, and debouched against Moscow and St. Hubert. Through the glass I could see the broken battalions as they clambered piecemeal out of the hollow, and tumbling together into approximate formation strove to push on up the gentler slope. Then there came heavier smoke banks on their right flank above the batteries at Point du Jour; the batteries of mitrailleuses at St. Hubert raged like wild cats right in their faces; the French infantry men, in position between St. Hubert and Moscow, fringed their ranks with spurting white smoke from their chassepots. It seemed as if, while a portion of the German attack fell back, the other moiety had lain down to get some cover and to bide the spending of the storm. True they had lain down, those soldiers who did not retreat; but it was not for them more to rear themselves into dressed ranks. It was for them to lie deeper yet, when the time should come, under the sod on which they were now prostrate. Effort after effort met with a similar fate, and at length the bootless and costly efforts were suspended. Von Zastrow had strengthened his artillery by Gravelotte, till, as I afterwards learned, he had fifty-four guns in position there, under whose pounding the French fire at Point du Jour somewhat slackened, giving

at length some relief to the 8th Corps in the wood to the northward. Zastrow boldly pushed infantry forward in support of his artillery, which to say the truth seemed to have rather incautiously worked themselves out to the front, so as to be in danger should the French essay a rapid and energetic push from Point du Jour across the ravine. Not content with this, it was clear that he had determined on beginning the offensive on his own account. This act of Zastrow's is the war incident of Gravelotte which has been most canvassed and controverted. It unquestionably resulted in disaster. As unquestionably it was done in the face of his positive orders to hold his own, and act as the stationary pivot for the corps to north of him. And it is certain, too, that Zastrow acted on his own responsibility in what he did, and in virtue of a certain far from narrow discretion which the German military policy allows to officers of any rank when placed in a position of self-reliance. Zastrow, it appears, had little to guide him as to the state of matters in the north. The wind had shifted as some say, and blew away from him the sound of the cannonade by Amanvilliers, Montigny, and Champenoise. As others have it, there was an actual lull in the firing soon after three o'clock, about the positions named. It is urged in favour of Zastrow that this inaudibility of the northern cannonade, from whatever cause, gave him some right to conclude that the French centre and right had been thrown back, and that the strenuous defence on the left was all that was between them and complete defeat. If these his premises had been sound, there is no doubt that Zastrow's conclusion, and the action he based upon it, were eminently creditable to his generalship. Had the French right and centre really been pushed back while the left maintained its ground, it is plain that Bazaine would have proceeded

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at once to strengthen the latter with the troops driven back on the former, since he could afford to disregard the progress of the German left and centre, sure ultimately to be brought up all standing on the great rear-buttress before which the French fought—the fortress of Metz. This in fact was what Bazaine did some hours afterwards when the Saxons had turned his right and the Guards had smashed his centre. Zastrow, arguing accordingly, as it seems, judged that it would be good strategy to anticipate any such strengthening for the French left by attacking it at once, and forcing it to participate in the retrograde movement to which he had concluded the centre and right were abandoned. Nay more; a decisive move on his part on the extreme French left might let him get through to their rear communications, and once in possession of the throat of the great chaussée about Jussy, he blocked the chief line of French retreat, while the 8th Corps, relieved from terrible torment by St. Hubert and the Point du Jour, might debouch from the wood on to the plateau, and take its position in the final crushing of the French front.

How von Zastrow reasoned I do not know; but he acted as if he had reasoned in the groove I have indicated. A sanguine man, he had not counted the cost of success, even if he should gain it; he had not, indeed, sufficiently studied the question whether success at all were possible. He shot his bolt, a self-reliant and over-confident archer, and he failed even to get the distance of the target. It was close on four o'clock when the offensive movement became perceptible. From beside Gravelotte one brigade (the 25th, of Glümer's corps) streamed down into the ravine inclining south-easterly, and the slackened French fire at Point du Jour kindling up upon them as they moved. Kamecke's division, which

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was already astride of the ravine where it penetrates the Bois de Vaux, contributed the 28th brigade, which could be seen pressing up to debouch on to the plateau of St. Hubert, where the skirting wood ceases nearly due south of Point du Jour. The French seemed to catch at the significance of the movement instantaneously as it was begun: their infantry, rushing to the left through the poplar trees on the chaussée, formed across the southern plateau, so as to flank as well as front the Germans when they should come staggering up on to this new battle-field. More batteries were dashed hurriedly into position and got into fire. Those previously there swung their trails round to the north somewhat, and their muzzles thus looked the way the German brigades were toiling upwards. High up as were the French, the depth of the ravine afforded the Germans miserably little cover from their fire. For the French gunners could almost see into its bed; and although the inverse rise could not be reached by a direct fire, they yet let fall upon it a plunging fire which, from the steepness of the slope, was much more destructive than plunging fires for the most part are. The loss must have been terrible in those ranks while they were struggling on to the debouchment. At length the edge of the wood and the lip of the ravine was gained. You could see groups and isolated men straggling out into the open and falling into formation in that momentary confusion which always attends such a reorganisation. Just then cannon, mitrailleuse, infantry fire, as if by signal, burst into one fell combination of outpour. Had the formation been an inanimate structure, it must have been battered down by sheer weight of metal; how much less then could it stand, made as it was of sentient men! There were efforts to make head against it nevertheless; detached rushes of rash men who

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were not to be convinced of the impossible till overtaken by arguments which crushed conviction in, while they crushed motion and life out. It was piteous to watch the efforts. I have seen sheep swept away in a spate swirling down a Highland glen—watched their struggles as they caught foothold on a scaur, where the rushing water shallowed, to get out of the vortex on to the firm land on the bank that seemed so absurdly close; how the water kelpie seized them again as they strove, whipped them remorselessly off their legs, and sent them down stream again battling impotently, as they span in the eddies, or were hurried down the rapids. The sight recurred to my recollection as I watched those soldiers struggling grimly for foothold on the edge of that deadly plateau. They would not give it up. Ever as one attempt was beaten back and crushed down, there were men pushing staunchly on to make another. It seemed such a little way, such a very little way, up to the poplar trees there and to victory; surely, with the goal so nigh, it was not to be thought of that it should be pronounced inaccessible. A thief might as well have tried to steal the Koh-i-Noor from its case in the Exhibition, as these men have persisted in their struggles to get to those poplar trees through the storm of iron and lead, the serried ranks, the densely lined rifle-pits, which were its protecting show-case. *"Mörderisch"* was how one that had looked into the eye of the fire till it beat him down, described that fire to me the same night—a quiet, unemotional, blood-depleted Feldwebel, who had been brought into Rezonville that the *Stabsarst* might judge whether it was worth while tinkering at a man who had six bullet-holes in him. Von Zastrow's heart must have bled as he watched his Kinder going down by sections. I know not whether an order came that the brigades

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should give up the useless persistence in courting annihilation, or whether they drew back in realisation of the insanity of such persistence. They did abandon it, and shrunk back off the plateau, lying down on the inverse bank of the ravine, screened from the enemy's direct fire, but exposed to the plunging fire, and raked by French infantry detachments that had pushed forward to the brink of the ravine, further northward, opposite St. Hubert. The batteries whose duty it was to support the two infantry brigades had to seek the plateau by the only route practicable for wheels—the chaussée crossing the ravine by deep cuttings and steep fall and rise. They got down, as it appeared, into the ravine. We saw them wheel off into the road and clatter down the Gravelotte slope at a trot. Behind them, at a swinging canter to overtake the guns, dashed a noble regiment of Uhlans. How gallantly the horsemen rode on their way to death! Artillery and cavalry disappeared into the ravine. Was it bottomless, then, that they never came out? The French infantry fire spurted out of the rifle-pits on the further brink; several batteries of mitrailleuses, in regularly constructed emplacements, took to grinding sedulously their cursed output; the cannon further back on the Point du Jour made practice over the heads of the mitrailleuse men and the sharpshooters, down into the bosom of the gorge. The German artillerymen did, as it appeared, get into action, with the muzzles of their pieces sticking up into the air, but guns were dismounted, and the gun detachments had to be reinforced over and over again, from the reserves in the rear by Gravelotte. As for the Uhlans, the morrow furnished a chart of their doings—a chart on which the courses were traced in by dead men and horses. They had striven to charge up the inverse slope of the chaussée on to the plateau of St. Hubert,

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and they had failed. Men and horses, not many,—it must have been a mad forlorn hope of reckless men,—lay on the roadway in the gutters, just on the brink of the plateau; there were none further, but very many all the way behind. If ever horsemen were wantonly butchered by being sent where it was staringly impossible they could have been of service unless their horses had been winged, those Uhlans were. I believe that, after losing nearly half their number, they were got down the narrow bed of the Mance, somewhere behind the position where the two infantry brigades were lying. They might as well have been in the moon.

Except an effort to cover with infantry-fire in some measure the batteries in the ravine, by the sending forward a couple of battalions of the infantry brigade that had been kept in reserve, an interim paralysis was forced upon the 1st Army. The firing still continued, both artillery and musketry, quickening now without apparent cause, now falling away for a little into a dropping fire; but of offensive movements on either side there were none. The game had seemingly ended in a stale-mate. Von Zastrow had little or nothing in hand, for, as it appeared, he had sent a brigade away on a fanciful excursion through the Bois de Vaux with a wide circuit to come in from the south upon Jussy and outflank the extreme French left; a rash project, which, the direct attack having failed, whose success must surely have been assumed in devising the flank march, ought to have resulted in the annihilation of the detached brigade, if the French had been as enterprising as they were stubborn. Von Göben was jammed in the Bois des Genivaux so long as the French fire from Moscow, St. Hubert, and the Point du Jour could sweep him off the onward path. The 1st Army was clubbed. Von Zastrow's intended

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coup de grâce was arrested; in his haste not to be too late he had raised his arm too soon, and had spent himself prematurely.

The Germans invaded France with armies whose numbers it is easy enough to utter glibly off the tongue, but whose magnitude it is very difficult adequately to realise. How many Britons have ever seen 30,000 armed men in a mass? We go to an Easter Monday review, and see some 26,000 men march past a saluting point, and come home in the notion that we have been looking at an uncommonly large body of troops. Let our Easter Monday Volunteer Army stand as an equivalent to a German army corps. The former takes about an hour and a half to defile past the commander. The Germans had fourteen of the latter in France to make war wherewithal, besides Landwehr divisions, a Würtemberger contingent, and fortress artillerymen, equal, on a moderate estimate, to two army corps more. At our Brighton pace a whole day, just twenty-four hours, would be consumed in the marching past of this half-million of men. There are obvious advantages in war-making when your numbers are so large that you do not require to stand particular about the absence or presence of an odd army corps or two, when you can comfortably leave one as a force of observation, dispatch another on a distinct measure of precaution, and reckon with tolerable confidence on yet a third dropping in to help you finish off your work with the greater thoroughness. This was the happy condition of the Germans at Gravelotte. If you care to join in the French cry, "Over-matched by two to one!" the Germans grimly meet you with the rejoinder, "Why be overmatched then? or, if you cannot help yourselves, why fly in the face of all experience of war, and roar 'A Berlin!' at the head of your scantier levies?" War is

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not a game like a school-boy boxing-match, where the spirit of fair play insists that there shall be some approximation to an even match between the two combatants. And even the school-green instinct of fair play does not stand in the way of allowing the stronger boy to put forth his whole strength when the weaker boy denies his weakness and is the challenger. The opportunely arriving German army corps on the 18th of August was the 2nd, whom Fransecki had marched without a halt from Pont-à-Mousson to Buxières on the southern rear of Mars-la-Tour. There, as it seems, the Pomeranians had cooked and eaten, and, as giants refreshed, had come on to Rezonville, eager to have a share in the day's amusement. Thence the King sent them into Gravelotte, to help Zastrow to a solution of the problem in which he had got mystified. It was a strange, grand sight to watch these fresh and splendid soldiers marching on in a stream that seemed endless. Nobody knew, within such ken as we had, whence the wonderful windfall had come. Some swore it was the 5th Corps from the Crown Prince of Prussia's army, that there was General von Kirchbach himself on the grey horse, and that the Crown Prince was in colloquy with his father at Rezonville. Others had it that it was the 4th Corps which had thus turned up promiscuously. But be it what it might, sure it was it did not dally by the way. The leading regiments formed in front of Gravelotte, others went north-easterly, so as to touch von Göben's flank in the Bois des Genivaux. By this time it was seven o'clock, and the setting sun going down in blood,—blood in the sky as on earth,—cast his ruddy rays slantingly on the lurid smoke-banks that overhung the battle-field, and battled with the yet redder-forked tongues of fire which were bursting out of the burning farm-buildings of Malmaison, where

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the wounded Frenchmen were being roasted alive in miserable helplessness. There was a general advance. The Zastrows straightened themselves up in their layer in the ravine, and once more essayed to get a grip of the ground on its brink. Fransecki's leading brigade took the chaussée and the easier dells of the ravine towards the Bois des Genivaux. The 8th Corps pressed the branches aside and sprang out of the wood into the open, heading for Moscow. Behind, all along the rear of the grand movement in which some 60,000 men were concerned, the artillery of the three corps shelled incessantly the French positions. The scene in the deepening twilight was inexpressibly splendid—with a splendour, however, that was baleful, and made the flesh creep and the blood turn. Right gallantly did the French stand up against the huge living wave. Their army was fighting not for the feeblest chance of victory: hardly any conceivable freak of the captious goddess could have given it that. But it was fighting for something yet more critical than victory,—for its very life; for if the Point du Jour were carried by the Germans, then von Zastrow's aspirations would have tardily yet surely been accomplished. The beaten centre and right would have had their line of retreat invaded; the defeat would have become a chaotic slaughter till the broken and bewildered battalions, barred from the chief line of retreat, had huddled somehow close under the guns of Plappeville and St. Quentin. The men who stood at Point du Jour, St. Hubert, and Moscow had it in their keeping to avert this terrible fate—to break the fall, all too dislocating already, of their brethren of the centre and right. Nobly they did their devoir. In numbers they could have been but slender as compared with their assailants; but they had a position, the merits of which were worth many

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men, and they were worthy of the position. The night fell, and still the bright streaks of flame shot westward from the batteries at the Point du Jour, evidence that French guns and gunners still stood there. Gradually the tongues of flames ceased to shoot forth, gradually a hush, such a contrast to the din of the day that it was almost painful, came over the bloody field. The dogs of war were satiated; they had lapped blood till they might lap no more. And still the Frenchmen stood by the Point du Jour, keeping at bay the foe while their friends defiled into safety behind the screen thus sturdily maintained for them. The 1st Army had fought well and squandered life recklessly; but spite of the late reinforcements it had to submit to the failure of its capital enterprise. The foreposts all but touched each other through the watches of the night. Those of the Germans were made specially strong, for the day's work had taught the watch-setters respect for those men on the crown of the height above them. And what of them? One knew nothing till the morning broke, and then it was found that the shattered churchyard-wall, and the smashed and half-burnt wayside houses, the rifle-pits and the battery emplacements were silent, save for the groaning of the wounded left behind, and empty, save of those and of the dead who lay beside them. The French, having held the position so long as it was of use, had abandoned it, and by six o'clock Fransecki's forepost men, creeping cautiously forward to the crown of the ridge, saw before them the brown scarp of Fort St. Quentin, with the beaten French host clinging round its base.

The wearied and powder-grimed Germans threw themselves down on the field, and slept among the dead who littered it. Bivouac fires were sparse, the men were too spent with hard fighting to care for food or warmth.

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They were lighted to their slumbers by ghastly chamber candlesticks; by the pillar of fire that yet towered heavenward from the burning Malmaison, and by another fire that showed over the horizon by Vernéville. In the darkness between nine and ten, there burst out the din of a furious cannonade to the north, and the tired soldiers who had piled their arms were made to resume them. But soon this in its turn died away, and the battle-field was left in peace.

Having now recounted what I personally saw of the battle of Gravelotte, I proceed to give a brief narrative of the occurrences which were not within the scope of my observation. The position of the several corps of the 2nd Army has already been detailed. By seven the three corps forming the 1st line were already on their north-easterly march in gigantic echelon of army corps. Their advance in this line was directed, as I have stated, to meet the expected contingency that Bazaine would attempt the northernmost of the three westerly routes toward Verdun. The German leaders had as yet no information warranting them in concluding definitely that this design had been abandoned, although indications pointed in that direction. These indications became so marked towards ten o'clock that Prince Frederick Charles judged it wise at least to arrest the march designed to meet a contingency, the occurrence of which was improbable; he therefore halted the Saxons, the flanking corps on the left, at Jarny, and the Guards at Doncourt; the 9th Corps had some time previously reached Caulre, and were halted there, cooking their breakfasts. It was not long before the Prince obtained additional assurance that the French were contemplating no advance move, but had elected to give him battle on ground of their own choosing on the plateau of Amanvilliers, and, as it

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appears, the King in his southerly position was early in possession of intelligence which led him to form the same conclusion. It would appear, however, that neither von Moltke nor Prince Frederick Charles had any idea that the French right was prolonged so far to the northward as it was; but on the contrary had the idea that their right flank rested on the village of Amanvilliers. It was in the light of this impression that the Saxons got the order to march on Batilly, where they would be close to Bazaine's path if he should tardily move off by the Brie road, while in the absence of any such endeavour, their course was thought open to make an easterly sweep, and take in flank the supposed French right in Amanvilliers, while an attack was being made on that position in front.

The latter attack was entrusted to the 9th Corps, supported by the Guards. Manstein marched his men off from Caulre about half-past ten, and headed direct on la Folie by Vernéville. It was at the latter place where he experienced the first resistance from the French holding it as an outpost position, and as soon as he showed his columns beyond it, began the furious cannonade, which to us in the south had been the token that the battle was begun in earnest. He had to fight his way hard after passing Vernéville. To get at the French position he had to march through the interval between the Bois de la Cusse and the north end of the Bois des Genivaux. The end of this gap toward Metz is closed in by Amanvilliers and Montigny-la-Grange; and here the French were posted in great strength, and indeed took the offensive against Manstein as he strove to deploy. He was not strong enough to make much impression on the position. Part of his artillery he got forward nearly as far as the farm of Champenoise, which was terribly mauled by his shell-fire, and with a part of Wrangel's division he

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occupied the edge of the Bois de la Cusse fronting toward Amanvilliers, supporting the infantry by several batteries. The Guards, in the meantime, had in part received another direction, the result of Prince Frederick Charles' appreciation of the fact that the French right extended further than he had at first reckoned upon. Von Pape marched his first division over Jouaville to Habonville, on the north of the Bois de la Cusse, while Budritzki, whose first orders were to march his division (the 1st) on Vernéville to support Manstein, had his course presently altered also upon Habonville. St. Privat was found strongly held by the French, and as it would have made a gap in the German line had the Guards gone so far north as to attack it, recourse was had to artillery practice to drive the French out of it. From a position between St. Ail and Habonville, Prince Hohenlohe, the General commanding the Guard artillery, converged on St. Privat the steady fire of no fewer than fourteen batteries of artillery, or, in other words, of 84 guns. Under the personal orders of Prince Frederick Charles, who visited that part of the scene of action between one and two, this pitiless fire was persevered in for more than an hour, as a means of marking time till the Saxons should come up on the left; and Prince Hohenlohe was able gradually to improve the positions of his batteries directed against St. Privat. But although the Saxons, pressing on from Jarny, were true to time, it was found that there was other work for them still further on the left. The French were in force also in St. Marie-aux-Chênes, and before the Saxons could cooperate with Prince August against St. Privat, it was necessary to sweep this obstacle out of their path, and also to ascertain exactly how far this French right, ever seemingly elongating itself further and further, really did extend. Prince George of Saxony with the 24th Division,

supported by a brigade from von Pape's left, fell upon St. Marie, while Montbé, with the 24th Saxon Division, swept round by Auboué and found that at length he was on the right of the French flank, and had at last got their weather-gauge. It was half-past three already when the Saxons (23rd Division) had carried St. Marie, and were ready with the 24th, looking now straight at Roncourt, to co-operate with the Guards in an attack on the formidable position of St. Privat. Meanwhile Manstein with his 9th Corps was not prospering. He had got a grip of the gap with Amanvilliers in its throat, and of the two woods flanking that gap; but farther he might not come. Amanvilliers was a position of great natural strength, and the French had accumulated about it a force of artillery which fairly coped even with the strong artillery that Manstein had brought into opposition. Fifteen of his guns were dismounted or otherwise rendered unserviceable by the French fire.

It was with difficulty that his infantry, by the Chantrenne Farm and the north-east corner of the Bois des Genivaux, could maintain themselves against the repeated and furious attacks of the French from la Folie, raked as they were also by mitrailleuse and artillery fire from Amanvilliers. On his right, the Hessians in the Bois de la Cusse were lacerated by a persistent infantry and mitrailleuse fire from the hamlet of Jerusalem, while the French artillery at St. Privat, firing over Jerusalem, showered shells upon the wood; and, in short, so far from being able to pursue the offensive, he had quite his work to hold his own. But the advantage of practically unlimited reserves told in his favour. The 3rd Army Corps had been marched on Vernéville, and halted there. Its artillery was available to support Manstein, and it was used in this way, as also was a portion of its cavalry. Then the Guards and the

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Saxons were perfecting their dispositions for storming St. Privat, and that would relieve his pressure from the left. Already before five the Guards were distracting the attention of the French holders of Jerusalem. The Garde Schützen Regiment had spread itself through the sparsely wooded Bois, and were scrambling forward through the underbrush. Soon the whole of the 4th Brigade of the Guards was marching on St. Privat from Habonville, and it was speedily followed by the bulk of von Pape's division from St. Privat. The Guards got near St. Privat, but they could not get into it. It was held by the French with inveterate stubbornness, and the natural strength of the position backed their defensive efforts. Prince August of Würtemberg had to hold his hand, and betake himself to artillery fire till assured of the co-operation of the Saxons, who were marching southward from Roncourt. The 10th Corps, too, was summoned close up in reserve, and, indeed, a part of Kraatz-Koschlau's division actually took part in the storm. At half-past six the Guards, standing waiting on the south and west, heard the music of the Saxon guns from the north, and then the von Papes got the word to show of what metal were the Prussian Guards. They stormed furiously into the place; as furiously came Montbé's Saxons in from the north. The double attack carried St. Privat; but after the Germans were in it, the French refused to go out, and had to be turned out, fighting desperately every step of the way, and causing terrible loss to their assailants before the operation was accomplished. Thus the French had their right flank turned, and were forced from the strong position on which it had rested. They were rolled backward into the woods of Jaumont and Saulny, but not utterly broken or completely disheartened. For it seems unquestionable that Bazaine was able to march toward the maintenance

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of his left-wing position at Point du Jour not only a portion of the Imperial Guards who constituted his reserve, and of whom he had made some, but hardly a sufficient, use during the day, but also some of the troops who were engaged at St. Privat, and who were moved under cover of the forced attack made on Manstein's position from Amanvilliers, just at nightfall.

How was it faring with Manstein while Prince August was relieving him of one embarrassment by carrying St. Privat? He, too, had made an offensive attempt on Amanvilliers simultaneously with von Pape's push at St. Privat, sending forward a brigade of the Hessians and a part of Wrangel's Division in combination with a detachment of the Guards detailed from the right of that corps, the whole supported by the artillery of the 3rd Corps. But even now Manstein could not get at the heart of the French centre in Amanvilliers, Montigny, La Grange, nor could his artillery get the dominance over that of the French. Alvensleben with his 3rd Corps was close up, and prepared to back up the labouring 9th Corps with the whole of Buddenbrock's Division. But Buddenbrock's men were not to be used just then in an offensive movement, for as they were coming the French took the initiative in great force, and hurled large masses of infantry on the Bois des Genivaux. It is a moot point whether the Imperial Guard participated in this attack in any strength. Next day, behind la Folie, I saw several dead Guardsmen, and after the capitulation of Metz an officer of the corps told me that a whole brigade of the Guards had been in action about Amanvilliers late in the day. If this was the case, it must have suffered little in proportion to the line regiments engaged, for the crop of corpses in Guard uniforms was comparatively very scanty. This late effort on the part of the French, made in

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twilight that had deepened into darkness before it was finally quelled, could scarcely have had any other object than to mask the retirement of the beaten right wing. It answered its purpose then not inefficiently, and there seems no ground for concluding that the Germans succeeded at all that night in carrying the position of Amanvilliers any more than the southerly one at Point du Jour. But it must have been tenable only on sufferance and by the favour of the darkness, and like Point du Jour it was abandoned in the early morning. The Saxon cavalry, with dashing enterprise, penetrated the northern forests the night of the battle and cut the railway and telegraphic communications between Metz and Thionville. By the following night the ring of Germans around Metz was well defined.

The battle of Gravelotte was both positively and relatively less bloody than that of Vionville. With more than double the number of troops engaged on the former day as compared with the latter, the Germans lost about 14,000 men; the French probably about the same number. What force Bazaine had in the field is difficult to estimate. When he surrendered, his strength, 173,000 men, was as surprising as it was inexplicable on the estimates to which the Germans had access. It seems impossible that he could have had fewer than 150,000 men at his disposal on the 18th of August; and it seems equally impossible that a man in possession of his senses, even without a scintilla of military capacity, should not on such an occasion have mustered out to the last man.

About noon on the 19th, I crossed over the ravine of Gravelotte, where in the gutters of the chaussée the blood of the Uhlans stood in red puddles, and pushed on past the ruins of the Auberge of St. Hubert and up to Point du Jour. The burying parties had hardly begun

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their work, the wounded were still lying on the slopes in great numbers. From the sharp angle formed by the chaussée, where it turns sharp to the south above St. Hubert, I went forward on the old Roman road over the flat. The Germans had not lost a minute. Already they were reversing the front of what the day before had been French battery emplacements and rifle pits. The replis lay behind entrenchments shaded by boughs of trees which the French had cut. And the French looked so strangely near—seemingly just over the way. They were encamped in peace on the slopes and the summit of Mont St. Quentin, the white *tentes d'abris* clustering round the fortress, and the smiling villages on the slopes. The scene was like a gigantic pic-nic or a gipsy camp, with the French tents beyond, and the Germans lolling in their bowers. There was no formal truce, but the peace was unbroken. Fort St. Quentin might have shelled the plateau where lay the Germans—in the morning, indeed, it had sent two shells into a group of mounted men standing before the detached house at the sharp turn of the road; but it seemed as if this had been merely a kind of formal protest against any supposition that it was not solely of its own will and pleasure that the fortress was quiet. The assertiveness was too emphatic to have been agreeable to the two dragoons killed by one of the shells; but the Germans were quite content to concede what they could not well have challenged, all the more readily because St. Quentin rested satisfied with the somewhat grim formality.

For a day or two immediately after Gravelotte there was a good deal of confusion as regarded several matters in the army which lay on the battle-field where so many gallant soldiers were yet without graves. The commissariat arrangements were hardly equal to the strain

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put upon them, while the great dearth of water, and the badness of quality in what was to be found, combined with the already ripe taint of putrefaction, the heat of the weather, and the revulsion from the excitement of the battle, to stimulate disease among the soldiers. Men who had to trust to the field-post for the transmission of letters, had their tempers sorely tried. On the 19th I consigned a letter to a fussy but civil functionary who was in charge of a field-post waggon a little way in front of Rezonville, and who professed his expectancy to start "*gleich*," which experience had taught me was a very elastic word. I found the field-post waggon was still stationary the following morning, the civil and fussy gentleman cooking at a bivouac fire a diabolical mess, consisting of fat bacon, onions, biscuits, minced something or other (it might have been postage stamps), coffee-grounds, and rice, while his horses placidly slept the sleep of the just as they stood ready harnessed for the start, even as they had done on the previous night. Again the courteous official professed his belief that he was to start *gleich*, although he owned that he had not the remotest idea what was his destination. In reply to my proposal to take my letter away and give it to some other less indefinite field-post, he professed his readiness to give it up, but advised me not to make bad worse. The ultimate result was that the letter miscarried altogether, and it was the case that letters which did arrive took longer time in reaching England from Gravelotte and the vicinity about this period, than they did from before Paris at a later period of the war.

On the morning of the 20th August I revisited the flat in front of the hamlet of St. Hubert, on which were stationed the German outposts, behind the entrenchments which they had been steadily working upon, and

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from which, the day before, the French army was visible, lying on the face of Mont St. Quentin, and around the villages of Scy, Lessy, and Lorry. To my surprise the French had totally disappeared. On the Friday the ground was white with their tents, around which swarmed the brisk gentlemen in the red trousers. Now, on the Saturday, not a tent or a pair of red trousers was visible. The surly fortification on the top of Mont St. Quentin frowned across in its solitude, the church-spire of Lorry smiled in the sunbeam that slanted across it, but the traces of a great army had as completely disappeared as if the ground had opened and swallowed up the host. I followed the concavity of the German semicircular entrenchments round to the left through the corner of the wood of Chatel, which extends under various names, but in one continuity, as far as Saulny, which is nearly due north from Metz. The Germans held the wood, and were entrenching its verge. Thus, within my own observation, a German belt extended thus early around Metz, from the Moselle at Moulins, in a sweep first to the west and then to the north, till it reaches within a mile and a half of the Thionville road. The troops which lined this belt consisted chiefly of Prince Frederick Charles's army. The completion of the ring was taken up by the army of General von Steinmetz. His district, so to speak, began at the Thionville road, and swept round the eastern semicircle of environment to the Moselle below Metz. Of course a space of such a magnitude as is here indicated could not in so short a time be invested with that closeness which would have been the case had the siege been simply that of a fortified town and citadel. But the investment was close enough for this,—that the army which was inside could not hope to get outside without fighting a pitched battle. Such a

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force as that of the French lying in and around Metz was not like the garrison of a detached fort, capable of an effort at cutting its way out by a sudden sortie. It must, as it seemed, break the cordon in form, and with warning sufficient to admit of a German concentration to oppose the endeavour.

In view of the long and weary inaction which the soldiers of the 1st and 2nd Armies endured while summer waned into autumn, and autumn had all but chilled into winter, it may not be uninteresting if I quote the *ipsissima verba* of a passage which I find in the notes which I made on this 20th of August, as calculated to show how, even thus early, circumstances rendered it possible to forecast the policy of the German leaders.

"Hitherto the German army has taken the *rôle* of aggression, and the French army has stood solely on the defensive. On the part of the Germans the aggressive tactics hitherto have been at once politic and characteristic in a national sense. It was necessary as a feature of the German programme that the French army of Metz should be got "into chancery," and that there should be some desperate and decisive fighting, in which might be demonstrated the impossibility of resistance to the fury and persistency of the German assaults. Both these ends have been accomplished. The army of Metz is beleaguered under its walls, the armies of Steinmetz and Prince Frederick Charles grimly standing sentry over it. The steep of Gorze, the plains of Vionville, of Rezonville, and of Gravelotte, the ravine beyond it, and the plateau of St. Hubert, strewn as they are with German dead, but left, nevertheless, in the rear of the unrelenting advance of the German host, bear bloody but unquestionable testimony to the fury and obstinacy of their attack. Thus the double purpose is attained. Now, therefore, the Ger-

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man tactics undergo an alteration. The children of the Fatherland will no longer spill their blood in attacks which would be purposeless, and therefore wanton; they await in their turn the assaults of the beleaguered French army. Sooner or later that assault must come. Want of supplies must precipitate the assumption of the offensive on the part of the French. But if they can manage to live till Christmas on the traditional French wealth of resources in the way of edible matter, it will not accord with German policy to attack them. So long as they are surrounded as they are now, they are harmless; if they would break the environment, and become again dangerous, they must fight for the freedom. The German leaders will not court the affray. Why should they, since their great object is the maintenance of the blockade? But since this is their object, it may well be imagined how they will resist any attempts to raise that blockade." It afterwards fell to my lot to be an eye-witness of the manner in which at least one of those attempts was resisted.

And was this investment of Metz, then, with its result, to all appearance, postponed indefinitely and uncertain, to be the end of all the German forced marching after Spicheren; of the rapid push across Lorraine; of the double battle above Gorze; of the German dead whose corpses are fertilising the plains of Vionville and Gravelotte; of the thousands of wounded who cumbered the towns and the villages all the way in the rear to Cologne and Mannheim? No. While there was another French army still in the field it was not for the Germans to linger about the scenes of their victories, and take to Lord Russell's policy of "Rest and be thankful." Prince Frederick Charles and General Steinmetz were reckoned, together, capable of sitting on the brink of the French well at Metz, and looking down on the French army in

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its depths. The Crown Prince, his army rested and refreshed in la belle Nancy, was already pushing westward, giving the contemptuous go-by to the obdurate little Toul. Already we heard rumours that his cavalry scouts were swarming in the valley of the Marne. About St. Marie, Amanvilliers, the blood-stained St. Privat and the battered Jerusalem, the picked soldiers of Germany—the army corps of the Guards, the Royal Saxons with their lissome dash, and the slower-pulsed Saxon Province men of the 4th Corps, were making haste to bury their dead, and were girding up their lines, to form a new—a 4th—army under the command of the Crown Prince of Saxony, and march westward and northward along the river from which the army took the name under which it made itself famous.

In a day or two the hotels of Pont-à-Mousson were to lose the custom of the princes and counts who were on the royal staff, for the King was to strike southward *viâ* Commercy, and joining his son at Ligny, accompany the 3rd Army in what seemed then was to be the straight, if not the bloodless road to Paris. What had occurred before Metz was but the first act of the tragedy, what should occur thenceforth in its vicinity was in this Titanic drama only "secondary business;" the piece was to be played on and out nearer and yet nearer to the torn heart of France.

But enough of what then was the future. On Saturday the 20th I traversed the whole of the battle-fields of Tuesday and Thursday, and the outward and visible signs of slaughter more and more convinced me that the fight of the former day had been unquestionably the fiercer and the more hotly contested. Let me attempt to give some idea of what may be termed the area of slaughter in the two days' fight. Within a space of

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about six miles in length by four in depth there was not a space so large as Piccadilly Circus that did not bear some token that one or more men had fallen upon it. Now the tokens were dead bodies, sometimes straggling so that several yards intervened, sometimes so close that you could hardly step without treading on the dead; again they consisted of bloody coats, pieces of linen, helmets, cuirasses with the tell-tale holes in them, knapsacks riddled by bullets, dead horses all but blown into fragments by the bursting of shells. The lines of demarcation between the German and the French dead were in places drawn with almost mathematical accuracy. On one of the roads leading up the steep slope out of Gorze I came on an outlying part of the table-land where the Germans lay very thickly. It looked as if they had advanced in a column along the road, for its margin was quite bordered with the dead. Here it was where the column had come up which an American of genius and fancy likened to a great anaconda, pushing forward with long tortuous folds till a battery opened on its hinder parts and amputated and all but destroyed its tail. Then I came to the place where the column had struggled into deployment and had got within the fatal 200 yards' distance of the Frenchmen. The latter lay far thicker then than the Germans had lain in the first space. Burial parties were at work at this place, but seemed bewildered to decide where to make a beginning. I advised one of the officers to double-trench the ground all over, laying the dead along the hollow of each successive trench, something like a celery bed; so many were they that this market-gardening style of grave would have been, I am convinced, the best plan for getting them out of sight; saving transport to isolated grave-pits, and lessening the temptation to bury too near to the surface, which is al-

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ways strong with burial parties who have excavated with labour a large pit, into which they are anxious to crowd all the corpses in the neighbourhood, regardless of the fact that the uppermost are so near the surface that the plough of the next spring must uncover their remains. The surface of the little churchyard of Gravelotte had been raised three feet all over in one day. The church had been crowded with the most severely wounded in the Thursday's battle, and as the poor fellows died they had been carried out into the churchyard. This with its loopholed wall had been the scene of a desperate stand on the part of the French, and already had more than its own share of corpses; so that, when I had seen it on the Friday, the bodies, chiefly of Frenchmen, were lying two deep all over its edge. The interior of the church was a sight I never can forget. Most know the ornamental character of these Catholic churches on the Continent, the meretriciously decorated altar, with the pictures, the candles, and what not. The white altar-cloth was splashed with blood, the floor was bedded all over with the wounded, and the atmosphere had become tainted and malaria-laden. In the churchyard I had noticed the little wooden memorials over the village dead, with the wreaths of immortelles around them, sticking up through the stacks of dead. To-day they were out of sight, covered with the earth that had been thrown over all as the easiest and quickest method of a wholesale interment.

I have referred to the "fatal 200 yards" of the Germans. Always the attacking force, as they had hitherto been, their fire was confessedly, and in the nature of things, wilder than that of a body waiting in a stationary position for them to come; and it was ever at the long-range distances that the French did so great execution among them with the chassepot. As to the question of

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the comparative accuracy of the Zündnadelgewehr and the chassepot as weapons of precision at long range, the Germans did not as yet appear inclined to express an opinion, yet one might gather even thus early what a terrible respect they had already learned for the weapon which they afterwards confessed to be "pale death" itself. But when they got within the 200 yards, and brought their needle-guns down to the point-blank range, then it was that their fire was of the "fatal" character I allude to. French prisoners with whom I spoke told with a shudder of the shower of bullets from the needle-gun at and within this range, that fell upon a column about the breasts and faces of the men, and against which nothing could stand. It is only on such vantage grounds as the top of the Spicheren or the edge of the ravine above the Gravelotte ravine that the French stood up for any time against this fire of the Germans.

Before quitting the position before Metz, on Monday, the 22nd August, I took a final walk along the foreposts on the Gravelotte side. The entrenchments of the Germans were now nearly complete, and although rough and ready, were very artistic in their formation. Sentries were stationed on the brink of the valley lying between Mont St. Quentin and the Chatel plateau, with strong piquets lying concealed in their rear. From their position I could see with the glass into the mouths of the heavy cannon of Fort St. Quentin, which looked strangely close. Going along a little to the right, in the direction of the Moselle, I was able to turn, so far as eyesight was concerned, the shoulder of Mont St. Quentin, and lo! stretched out before me lay the beautiful plain of Metz, with the river gleaming in the sunshine, the spires and roofs of the town sparkling brightly, and the gloomy mass of Fort Bellecroix—the finest work of Cormontaigne—

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grimly covering the right. The German cordon, I was assured by a staff officer, was now completely drawn round Metz, and Thionville was also invested. There was every appearance that the armies of Prince Frederick Charles and Steinmetz had quietly settled themselves down in their position. Crimean men have been wont to assert that the French were the best constructors of huts in the world, but I question whether the Germans do not excel them. All along these tablelands they had built themselves dainty little leafy habitations out of the branches and bark of the poplar trees that line the roads, and seemed as comfortable as if they were at home in their cottages in the Fatherland. As I passed one of the regiments its band, standing in a circle, was practising one of Mendelssohn's masterpieces, the men enjoying the strains *sub tegmine fagi*, while all around the burying parties were engaged in burying not only their own but their enemy's dead out of their sight.

On returning to Pont-à-Mousson, from my first start to Thiaucourt, I had determined to walk no longer, but at once to invest in a horse, if one was to be procured in the town. This at first seemed doubtful, for the Germans had made a very exhaustive levy, but ultimately I chanced on a horse-dealer whose stud had not quite been swept away. He was one of the most marvellously stolid men I have ever seen, half German, half French: the blended blood seemed wholly to have stagnated in his veins. Almost the only sign of animation he evinced was a wink, but then that wink was remarkably expressive. I was fortunate. He had an admirable horse in his stable, sure-footed, fast, easily kept, and in fact a compendium of equine virtues. But—bother the buts, they always crop up in such cases—this paragon of animals had one little drawback, he was stone-blind. Now there some-

times are advantages connected with a blind horse—that is, if he is a reasonable animal otherwise. He trusts his rider and will go straightforward courageously, till the rein gives a hint to turn to the right or the left. There is no fear of his shying, because to him there are no objects of alarm. He commonly has good action and a light mouth. In view of all this I directed the blind horse to be saddled and brought forth. I mounted and set him a-going.

It is cruel to be hard on the misfortunes of a fellow-creature, but this horse must have had a mental organisation as opaque as the pupils of his eyeballs. Three steps in any one direction were enough for him, then he tried another, and so continued this process, totally insensible to any suggestions on the part of his rider. He ran his nose against a house, and then he all but fell over a plough; finally, in one of his tacks, he broke the glass of a general's carriage, and brought down a "Donnerwetter" or two upon my head. Tired as I was of walking, I became fully impressed with the fact that it would be cheaper to walk ten miles than to ride the blind horse one, even if such a feat were possible, and, dismounting, I led him back somewhat ignobly to the stable. The horse-dealer winked solemnly, bestowed a caress on the abominable brute, and expressed his astonishment that I should not have found him all that could be desired. The excuse was, that he had always been driven alongside of another beast, and the deprivation of his companion had demoralised him. But I was bidden be of good cheer, the horse-dealer was still assured that he would be able to accommodate me. After a little delay another steed was brought forth. He was "long and low"—the true Leicestershire desiderata. The length was principally in the neck, which resembled that of an

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ostrich; the lowness was in the back, which curved downward so that his withers and rump stood up like two sharply-pronounced hills. His colour was a dirty-white; he had capped hocks, a pair of most villanous recently-broken knees, and a wicked backward cast in his eye that said very little for his temper. His appearance was certainly not in his favour, but remembering the adage never to trust to appearances, and being assured he was a remarkable performer, I mounted and got him under way. He went decently enough to the end of the street; but when a battery of artillery came along the cross street at a trot he soon gave me a sample of his remarkable performances. He declined to go forward at any price, but instead he was open to kicking as freely as the heart of man could desire. He kicked the battery into the direst confusion, wriggling about here, there, and everywhere, continually elevating that prominent rump of his, and struggling furiously to get his head down. I thought I should have had to choose a favourable moment and dismount, leaving him and the battery to settle it between themselves, but at length I got his head homewards, and then he suddenly subsided, and walked to his stable as if he had done something to be proud of.

The horse-dealer winked again as I returned a second time, and said he had still another beast. The past experience was not of a character to tempt further experiments, but I wanted a horse badly, and I knew this was my last chance; so I told them to bring him out. He was a very conscientious-looking quadruped, slightly monumental as to his legs, but then he had a bold Roman nose, and a tail possessed of what may be styled the Grecian bend of horsetails. My heart warmed to him at once, for, like myself, he was an old dragoon. He had

been cast from a French cavalry regiment in some remote age, and had since been engaged, judging by the collar marks, as a beast of burden. Well, I started with this animal for a third trial, and to do him justice, his conduct did not belie his conscientious aspect. He plodded forward steadily at a kind of compound of a walk, a trot, and a canter; he seemed to be walking with his fore legs, trotting with one of his hind legs, and cantering with the other. The effect was novel, if not wholly agreeable, and then he really got over the ground very fairly. On the day of Gravelotte he carried me uncommonly well, his ancient military training making him stand fire like an adjutant's horse, which is generally too depressed in spirits to manifest emotion at anything short of an earthquake. I began to get very sweet on him, although the scarcity of keep was a considerable inconvenience. There was but little bother with him on the Thursday night. When I joined the bivouac I fastened him to the end of a row of cuirassier horses that were picketed close by, and the men gave him of their oats and hay. But they went away next morning, the bivouac broke up, and fresh quarters had to be sought. In one of the houses of the deserted village of Gravelotte I found a room which was tenanted only by two sorely wounded men and an hospital attendant. All the other houses were packed full of wounded, and one was in luck in getting the use of a chair, and of the common frying-pan in which to cook a piece of bacon bought from a marketender. But there was no room for the horse, and if there had been, he would not have been the best company for the wounded men. I tied him up outside while I ate, wrote, and slept, and then late in the afternoon it struck me that he must be thirsty. I rode the brute a circuit of some five miles in search of water, and when I got back it was all

but dark. On entering the room I found one of the wounded men lying dead, and the other removed along with the hospital man. It was not pleasant to occupy the same room with the poor dead fellow, and luckily an empty stable turned up next door with plenty of hay in the loft. Having fed the horse copiously, I adjourned among the hay to sleep, and in the morning I found my noble steed was gone! Perhaps he had broken the fastening, and walked away of his own accord; perhaps a passing suttler had stolen him. Anyhow he was clear away, leaving me as a memento the saddle and bridle. These, which were of the nature of a white elephant, I was glad to get rid of for a box of cigars, and fortunately my comrade turned up from Pont-à-Mousson with a carriage horse, and driver that by some inscrutable means he had discovered there unrequisitioned.

CHAPTER IV.

Sedan: before and after.

HAVING made up our minds to quit the beleaguerment of Metz and strike off in a southerly direction with intent to hit on the march of the Crown Prince's army, we started off rather vaguely on the 22nd of August, and reached St. Mihiel, a small town on the Meuse, the same night.

Now it seems hardly to be realised how difficult it was in the times of which I am writing to get reliable information, or to guard against being led away by some baseless rumour. I remember we lost the whole of the 23rd by slanting away to the north-west as far as a village called Fresnes, by reason of a circumstantial, but untrue story, to the effect that a battle was imminent under the walls of Verdun. When we quitted St. Mihiel

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for Bar-le-Duc on the morning of the 24th we could get no certain information whether it was as yet safe to go to Bar-le-Duc. We travelled with a column as far as Villotte, and then the troops struck away to the north in the direction of Vaubenoit. In answer to questions at Villotte, it was not to be learned that any German troops had taken the road to Bar-le-Duc, which lies through that village. There had been fighting, the villagers lyingly said, somewhere to the south-west, and the road to Bar-le-Duc ran south-west. Going on upon chance, we presently came into a deeply-wooded defile, extending for several miles. Not a German was visible; indeed, nothing human was to be seen. The place was calculated to make one nervous, especially when one's driver had a fixed belief that there was a Frenchman behind every stump. He was a Luxemburger, and therefore theoretically a neutral, but I think he sympathised with the *grande nation*.

Possibly no reader has ever practised the art of reconnoitring from an open carriage, and I may describe the process. You cautiously advance till you reach an angle; then you steal round it and halt, and sweep the whole front and flanks with your binocular. Nothing suspicious is visible, so you trot along the straight till you approach another turn, when you repeat the cautious tactics. You get along at the rate of about two miles and a half an hour. If you see anything suspicious, such as the smoke of a camp fire, you cautiously retire your machine and make a pedestrian reconnoissance. Of course, with all this caution, we reached Vaires in perfect safety, and found it full of Bavarian cavalry, who told me that their army was in great force in Bar-le-Duc and ever so much farther forward. About two hours after we got into Bar-le-Duc we saw the old King arrive in his open travelling

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carriage. He had spent the previous night at Commercy. His quarters were in the largest house in the town, the Banque de France, on one of the charming Boulevards by which this very pretty town is surrounded. The Bavarians were very proud at being permitted to find him his guard, and I confess I pitied the two sentries on the door, who had to present arms on an average of about four times a minute. A Bavarian regimental band played in front of the Royal quarters in the early evening, and King Wilhelm came out and placidly smoked his cigar on the balcony, listening to the music. The townsfolk could not understand the quiet, homely way in which the Royal state of the Prussian monarch is conducted. When the French Emperor passed through on his way to Metz he, too, slept at the Banque de France, but he was surrounded by a cordon of guards, sentries, and police spies. The people made no secret of the fact that they liked the Prussian way of doing business best. The hotel-keepers remarked that they got their bills paid as if the generals were tourists, whereas the French gave promises to pay when the war should be over. During the day about thirty thousand men of the Crown Prince's army passed through the town—chiefly Bavarians. The light blue of the Bavarian uniform does not wear well in point of looks—it gets soiled in no time and then even the officers look seedy. The helmet, too, is a creation of intensest ugliness. It has no split crow in gold on the front, but the letter "L" for the King's initial, and it is surmounted by a ridgy tuft of upstanding bear's-skin that looks like a dolly. But the Bavarian soldiers, spite of an ugly uniform, were fine fellows, and right serviceable-looking soldiers. The Crown Prince had given them some notable lessons in marching, and they had thrown away everything not essential, the very officers carrying

their own kits in knapsacks on their backs. There were no led horses with portmanteaus, few pack waggons, and none of the impedimenta to which Prince Frederick Charles's army was somewhat addicted. The men did not seem very uniform in size, and toward the tail of the regiment some of them ran smaller than would be admitted in the German service. But they were smart, clean-built fellows, with an elastic spring in their step, and bright, keen eyes, and altogether had a fighting look about them; and Weissenburg and Wörth were evidence that their actions corroborated their looks. Their cavalry was smart enough, but not very brilliantly mounted. The horses seemed more of the work-animal pattern than those of the Prussian Dragoons or Uhlans, but looked good weight-carriers, and had lost wonderfully little in flesh considering what had been taken out of them.

What a grand old motto is *festina lente!* In the early morning of the 25th, in full conviction that in two or three days the King and the Crown Prince, according to the programme then current, would be in Châlons, we started off thither, glad in the belief that we were so well to the front. It was, I believe, in the forenoon of the 25th that the change of tactics was arranged consequent on the discovery of MacMahon's movement to the north; thus, when the troops about Bar-le-Duc were commencing that wonderful series of marches which brought them on the right flank of the French in the valley of the Meuse, we were jogging contentedly towards Vitry. In the worm-eaten old fortress we found a couple of battalions, the place having been abandoned by the Mobile garrison on the approach of the German troops, the curious miscellaneous assortment of guns having been partly pitched into the moat, partly left on the ramparts. The day after the evacuation several hundreds of the garrison had

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been surrounded in a wood by a comparative handful of Uhlans and made prisoners, after firing a few harmless volleys. The garrison of Vitry and the troops in the neighbourhood received orders on the 26th to march to the northward; but no explanation of the reason accompanied those orders, and nobody in Vitry had any knowledge as to the radical alteration in the situation. The march to the north was regarded as simply a slight diversion, and none doubted that MacMahon was falling back from the camp of Châlons. The road to Châlons then seemed still the chief thoroughfare for the advance of the German army, and off for Châlons we set by the southern bank of the Marne. During the whole journey we saw but one German—an officer driven in a gig by a peasant, and engaged in noting the bridges and fords on the Marne. The timid country people, anxious to sell their produce, continually begged of us to tell them whether they could get into Vitry. We might have been in a land of profound peace, so far away seemed everything warlike. When we reached the iron gates where the municipals of Châlons collect the octroi dues, it was matter of surprise that there stood no men in spiked helmets on sentry there. On we drove into the town, through streets thronged with people gossipping and gesticulating; and still never a German uniform was visible. Relinquishing our intention of halting at a hotel, we pushed right on, trying to look as unconcerned as possible, till we got on the further boulevard, where a well-intentioned townsman stopped us to say that if we went much further there were Germans still about who were sure to requisition our vehicle. Thanking him for form sake we pressed on till, some two miles outside of Châlons on the road to Suippes, we overtook an officer and five men of the Black Hussars, the last of the troops

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who had evacuated Châlons for the march to the north. This party we accompanied to Suippes, where we were on the extreme left flank of the German army. What boots it to narrate the little good purpose to which, chasing the shadows thrown out by defective information, we spent the days from the 27th to the 31st—how we were carried prisoners by an over-zealous train officer to Turane, where Prince Albrecht, commanding the cavalry covering the flank, blew him up for his officiousness—how we tracked back toward St. Menehould and then north to Vouziers, where we saw francs-tireurs shot, and the villages burnt in which they had fired on the German patrols—how on the 30th, passing through deserted camp after deserted camp of MacMahon's army, we were within a short distance of the surprise of Beaumont without knowing it, and how at length in the afternoon we came into Chemery by the southern road as the Crown Prince, with the 5th Army Corps, came down by the eastern from Stonne? Where the two roads join at the end of the dismal village he halted, and regiment after regiment, first of the 11th and then of the 5th Corps, marched past him, dusty, fagged, but full of fight. Then there was a rattle of wheels, and the carriages containing the King and his staff drove up, and halted in the dusty road while Wilhelm dismounted, and stood by his son till the last proviant waggon of the 5th Corps had filed past, and till his uniform was so white with the dust that you might have taken him for a venerable baker who had mounted a sword and a helmet. Then he laid his hand on his son's arm, and the pair walked slowly up a narrow lane to the right between two gardens. For awhile father and son stood talking earnestly, the senior with his hand on the other's shoulder, the younger holding an unfolded map in his hand and talking earnestly. Then

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von Moltke and Blumenthal were beckoned up out of the throng of staff officers, and presently von Roon and Podbielski. The open air council of war lasted for nearly half an hour, and then the King left Chemery at a brisk trot, crossed the valley to Malmy, and went off down the further side of the canal to his head-quarters for the night at Vendresse. In the lane between the gardens, as I afterwards learnt, it was decided that the crushing blow should be dealt next day instead of being postponed, as originally intended, till the 2nd of September.

It was entirely by chance that, unattached as we were to anything or anybody, while posting letters in Vendresse about seven o'clock on the morning of the 1st September, we heard that there was fighting going on to the north, in the valley of the Meuse. The King had been out of bed and away ever since the early morning—gone, one of the Royal gendarmes sagely informed us, to visit the battle of the previous day but one. Of course we started at once, found the road utterly deserted, and, taking the wrong branch at the fork, came down into the valley of the Meuse nearly as far west as Mezières, and for the time at least out of view of the great battle that was raging as we trotted rapidly forward. But the whole valley was resonant with the din of battle. Away to our right we could hear the crash of the artillery fire at Sedan. Over against Donchery, midway between Sedan and Mezières, the blazing villages sent baleful flakes of flame up into the bright sky. At Mezières itself the Würtembergers, from the top of the heights between us and the town, were replying with shells and musketry to the cannon from the bastions and the spiteful whirr of the mitrailleuses from the glacis. As we came down into the valley we passed through large French camps

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with the fires still burning. This had evidently been the scene of a surprise. The men had left their camp-kettles on the logs and their knapsacks in the lines; they seemed to have hurriedly snatched their arms and made off, some indeed having gone away without the preliminary ceremony of grasping their rifles. Here and there, but at rare intervals, were strewn corpses of men and horses, and the hospital flag was flying from several houses. Ere we left the height we saw regiment after regiment of Würtembergers press out of the village of Flize up on to the bluff which overhangs the town, and stand there blazing away at something that seemingly lay between them and the town, while the great guns of the fortress tried in vain to dislodge them. Reaching Flize I found several regiments of Würtembergers drawn up and in a high state of excitement by reason of the easy manner in which they had driven the enemy close up under the walls of Mezières. It had been a running skirmish for several miles in length and breadth. The French on the previous night had broken down a wooden suspension bridge crossing the Meuse close under the east of Flize. The suspension cables were composed of strands of fine wire; one of them only was cut, and the floor of the bridge had turned a complete somersault over the still standing wire, lying upside down in the bed of the river. The Würtembergers had, about midnight, thrown a pontoon across in twenty-five minutes, and followed up the pursuit on the northern river flat, while they continued to press the French towards the town on the southern knolls and heights. About the time we arrived the latter had been driven in a huddled mass on to the exposed glacis of the fortress, and were struggling for entrance at the gates. The Würtembergers from the heights, disregarding the feeble and ill-directed fire from

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the guns that ought to have covered the French retirement into the fortress, poured down volley after volley of musketry into the chaotic mass lying below them. Then just as we reached the height a battery opened fire with shells, and caught the range of the entrance gate through the fortress wall at the first shot. Two streams were meeting and battling at this entrance; the block was complete, when a shell hurtled into its midst, and, exploding as it fell, blew the densely-packed human mass, mangled and bleeding, in all directions. This terrible fire of shells never ceased till the Frenchmen were inside the great gate; and many there were that tried to enter whom the bursting shells forbade not only to enter but to live. The officer in command of the Würtembergers told us that he had no intention of assailing the fortress itself till further orders, and that he had complied with his instructions when he had chased the French inside of it. The guns were roaring up the valley at Sedan, and if we made haste we might yet be in time to see some fighting there. So we went off rapidly towards Sedan along the great chaussée, and reached a knoll behind the village of Frenois, which commands a view of the whole valley, just in time to witness the last of a series of brilliant cavalry charges made by the French Chasseurs d'Afrique, which went far to annihilate that body of dashing horsemen.

Sedan, a fortress of considerable strength, with a moderate-sized town, lies round the convex side of a northern bend of the Meuse. On the south-east, toward Wadelincourt and Balan, there were considerable artificially-caused inundations which materially added to the strength of the place on that side. Further to the south-west, and on both sides of the river, spreads out a considerable alluvial tract, probably at one time a lake. Near

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the centre of the northern section of this is, or rather was, the large village of Bazeilles. On the west side of the town the configuration of the ground is more complicated. The river quits the town in a north-westerly direction, leaving the suburb of Torcy on the south, and presently trends away north-west by north for a stretch over two miles. Doubling back with considerable abruptness it comes back nearly due south a distance of about three miles, skirting near the foot of this second stretch the grounds of the Chateau Bellevue, and impinging rather abruptly on the high ground by the village of Frenois, which diverts its course in a westerly direction towards Donchery. By this loop a peninsula is enclosed, which a canal across the isthmus converts wholly into an island—the island which for several days formed the wretched prison of the captured French army. At the angle where, on the side nearest Sedan, the canal leaves the Meuse, stands the village of Glaire; nearer Sedan, on the south side of the river, is the village of Torcy. On the southern side of Sedan a range of more or less abrupt high ground quits the bank of the Meuse above Wadelincourt (that is, on the south-eastern side of the town), and sweeping round envelopes a plain of some size till it comes closer to the river again at Frenois, after which it runs away parallel with the Meuse till broken by the river Bar running down northward from the low hills of the Argonne to join the Meuse not far from the village of Dom-le-Mesnil. This range comprises several eminences of considerable height: the loftiest is that just above the town of Donchery, on the summit of which is the chateau of the same name,—the point from which the Crown Prince directed operations on the day of the battle. At ill-defined right angles from this range there runs out a lower rounded spur, which gradually lessens

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in elevation as the river comes to meet it at Frenois, and disappears altogether a few hundred yards further north. On its northern shoulder is built the Chateau Bellevue, which, from its moderate elevation, looks across the river and over the plain to Donchery in one direction, and down upon Sedan on the other, seeming from its position, as looked at from either place, to stand considerably higher than it really does. On the north side of the Meuse there is a range of high ground resembling in many points that on the south. Commencing behind Sedan, the heights on the north are less rugged and have their tops, as it were, shaved off, so as to constitute a tableland sloping ever towards the river. Round the top of the loop the heights come pretty close to the river, but they leave to the west of it the considerable plain of Donchery, and their slopes are easier, studded with villages and fields, alternated with woods. On the Sedan side of the loop the belt of meadow-plain left is narrower, but it attains a considerable width just opposite the village of Glaire. Depressions rather than ravines serrate the high ground rectangularly, one of these being close to the town of Sedan. Behind all rise the forest-clad hills of the Ardennes, and the frontier is but a few miles off among those.

The Germans had driven the French out of the country on the south side of the Meuse, and the French lay along the northern bank. It may be said either that they had no proper front, or that they had three fronts. It was surely in some sense a front rather than a flank position, the extended face shown to the Bavarians and Crown Prince of Saxony's army all the way from Bazeilles by Daigny back to Givonne. It was a very deep flank, if it could be called a flank, on which the 5th and 11th Corps fell on the west after their circuitous march to the head

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of the loop. But the nominal front may be said to have stretched along the river, with the fortress for its centre, whose fortifications were manned, and in and about which was accumulated the French train and other impedimenta.

Of the masses which fought so toughly with the Saxons and Bavarians on the north-east and south-east of the town, or of the character of the battle that raged all round that side, I can say nothing as an eye-witness. But when I came in sight of the ground a large force of French infantry, cavalry, and artillery held the broad, flattened top of the bluff height next but one to the fortress on the westward side of the town and the northern bank of the river. The great focus of interest to me was this flattened bluff standing forward into the valley, and bounded on the Sedan side as I have described, on the Mezières side by a wider depression, which, rising gradually, ultimately loses itself almost imperceptibly on the higher ground. This depression forms a sort of bay, round which sweeps the high ground, which then extends all the way westward as far as opposite Donchery, more or less elevated, and crested everywhere by a dense wood. In the very centre of this bay there rises an isolated knoll or mamelon, nearly to an equal height with the high ground flanking the bay, and affording a remarkable position for assailing with advantage the table land on which stood the French; since, crowned with wood, it formed admirable cover for any troops advancing from the west along the low ground, who had full opportunity to make all their dispositions without exposing so much as a helmet. And then, there was the choice either of standing on the top of the mamelon and firing across, of going to the left up the valley on to the height, or of debouching on to the low river-flat to the right, and from there assailing the table land where its slope was least abrupt,

and where a road up its face was calculated to afford material assistance to an attacking party. That the Germans fully appreciated the strategical value of this mamelon became speedily apparent.

In the small hours of the morning, the 11th and the 5th Army Corps, which, after passing through Chemery, had pushed on to make their bivouac between Dom and Donchery, had crossed the Meuse by two pontoon bridges below their bivouac. The latter corps had struck up at once right out of the valley to the edge of the forests cresting the upper ground, and had then come left shoulders forward through the upland farms and villages, having to fight their way smartly as they progressed, and leaving a track of fire and smoke behind them. As we came into the valley above Flize, the line of this advance was already marked by those lurid insignia. The 11th Corps, on crossing the stream, right inclined considerably sooner than the 5th, and kept on the lower ground, while they bored on forward to round the top of the loop. Thus those two corps were marching on the right flank of the French, or on what I prefer to regard as having been its right face. Up till nine o'clock the battle, in this direction at all events, had been confined chiefly to artillery, but, soon after, the 5th Corps had got to close quarters away on the further upland, and the left of the 11th Corps was even sooner in the thick of it, nearer the river and adjacent to the place where the depression in which stands the mamelon loses itself on the upland. The French artillery first essayed in vain to stay the resolute progress of the German troops. Then their cavalry charged again and again—lancers, cuirassiers, and chasseurs-à-cheval—hurling themselves on the ever-advancing columns, with a courage which all who witnessed it unite in calling heroic. But the bayonets bore them back, as

bayonets, in the hands of resolute disciplined infantrymen, will ever bear back horsemen, and then the two infantries came together, and the engagement at this point became close and general.

While these things were being transacted on the upland, a manœuvre was in progress for taking avail of the advantage which the isolated mamelon rising out of the centre of the embayed depression, was calculated to afford. There gradually massed behind it a large force of infantry and several batteries of artillery, belonging, no doubt, to the right division of the 11th Corps. More than one regiment and battery occupied the summit, and fired across point blank, replying with advantage to the direct cannon and mitrailleuse fire of the French from opposite, by reason of their advantageous position among the trees, while they also found opportunity to throw in a raking fire upon the left shoulders of the French infantry engaged with the Germans up at the head of the bay. A couple of regiments, under cover of this fire, dashed up the bottom of the depression on to the table land, and took the fighting Frenchmen on the flank, hurling them back, and leaving their guns and mitrailleuses in a position from which they had to retreat to prevent their own capture. The Germans then pressed the French steadily backward across the table-land toward the ravine on the side of Sedan, not without desperate fighting and heavy loss. As they were being thus pushed back, the French flank came within the range of two or three batteries of Bothmer's Bavarian division, which had from the first been stationed on the opposite side of the Meuse, on a rising ground running out into the flat a little to the eastward of the village of Frenois. But this was at long range, and did not do all the execution which the leaders must have desiderated. Therefore, from behind

the mamelon in the bay, there issued to the right a German infantry brigade of the 11th Corps and a battery of artillery. The little force skirted the plain at the base of the high ground till it came in a direct line with the fire of the Bavarian guns playing on the height over their heads. There, in the meadow opposite, in and about Floing they had a sharp brush with a regiment of French cuirassiers of the Guard, who had been stationed in a hamlet on the verge of the meadow. The cuirassiers, with their floating horsehair plumes and their long, straight swords, charged home knee to knee like gallant soldiers as they were; but we saw about half a dozen batches of white smoke, and then a broken, straggling stream of horsemen hurriedly breasting the steep by the terraced road that runs up it, leaving their track chequered by fallen men and horses. The terraced road was then followed by the battery, the brigade of infantry struggling up, regardless of a path. The little force was wholly protected from the enemy's fire so long as it kept under the brow, and was further advantaged by the Bavarian fire, which was whistling high over its head. That fire stopped as the helmet spikes showed on to the table land, with the battery flanking it, the whole looking straight into the right flank of the Frenchmen retreating towards Sedan. The artillery began its measured booming; the infantrymen plied the needle-gun. It seemed as if the French retreat must become a rout. But there was still left heart among the Frenchmen for an attempt to hurl at least this last thorn in their side off the table land into the plain by the Meuse. At a gallop through the ragged intervals in the confused masses of the infantry came dashing the Chasseurs d'Afrique. The squadrons halted, fronted, and then wheeled into line, at a pace and with a regularity which would have done them credit in the

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Champ de Mars, and did them double credit, executed as was the evolution under a warm fire. That fire, as one could tell by the dying away of the smoke jets, ceased all of a sudden, as if the trumpets which rang out the "Charge!" for the Chasseurs had sounded also the "Cease firing!" for the German artillery and infantry. Not a needle-gun gave fire as the splendid horsemen crashed down the gentle slope with the velocity of an avalanche. I have seen not a few cavalry charges, but I never saw a finer one, whether from a spectator's or an adjutant's point of view, than this one of the Chasseurs d'Afrique. It was destined to a sudden arrestment, and that without the ceremony of the trumpets sounding the "Halt." The horsemen and the footmen might have seen the colour of each others' moustaches (to use Havelock's favourite phrase), when along the line of the latter there flashed out a sudden, simultaneous streak of fire. Like thunder claps sounding over the din of a hurricane, rose the measured crash of the battery guns, and the cloud of white smoke drifted away towards the Chasseurs, enveloping them for the moment from one's sight. When it blew away, there was visible a line of bright uniforms and grey horses struggling prostrate among the potato drills, or lying still in death. Only a handful of all the gallant show of five minutes before were galloping backward up the slope, leaving tokens at intervals of their progress as they retreated. So thorough a destruction, by what may be called a single volley probably the oldest soldier now alive never witnessed. The cavalry blotted out, still the French infantry found courage in despair for one last effort. It was to almost certain death, and to absolutely certain defeat, that that straggling line came on, irregularly firing as it pushed forward. Rushes of impotent passion burst out from parts of the line; other

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parts only staggered slowly forward, as if against a high wind. What came of the effort it was hard to tell in the distracting medley, till the time came for one to go on to the battle-field, after the combatants had quitted it. Under the veil of white smoke the tattered line of infantrymen seemed gradually to melt away, without having ever come to close quarters with the enemy, who stood so solidly pouring his fire into its teeth; but that some, both of the horsemen and the footmen, must have got somehow to the brink of the slope, seemed evident from the fact that dead men of both arms lay after the battle either on the road which slanted up the steep, or huddled at its bottom, as if either their impetus had overshot the mark, or they had been pitched over by the German infantrymen, who kept so tight a hold of the position on to which they had struggled.

Meanwhile the Bavarians from Bazeilles on the eastward of Sedan, the Saxons by Daigny and Givonne on the north-eastward, and the Prussian Guards edging round till they had reached due north of the town, were steadily, and with very hard fighting, driving in the French on their respective fronts. Pressing still to their own right, the right flank of the Guards began to touch the ever further and further overlapping left of the 5th Corps, till at length the junction was complete, and there was no thoroughfare through lines composed of soldiers such as those. And so the French host was environed and cut off from the frontier and from escape in that direction by a semicircle round Sedan, the chord of which was the Meuse. Then the Meuse on its south side was lined by Bavarian and Prussian troops, and the investment was complete. The citadel could not hold half the French infantry, to say nothing of the cavalry, artillery, and train; the town, it was seen from the battle-field, was

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densely packed even on to the exposed side of the glacis; and it seemed, as the firing gradually died away, almost to nothing, before three o'clock, that the battle was surely over. A report, indeed, ran round that the place, and all that was in it, had capitulated; but that this was premature was shown by the recommencement of artillery fire from the south-east between four and five. At what or at whom this fire was directed, none in our vicinity could tell, till volumes of black smoke, rising from inside the ramparts, gave indication that the city itself was the mark. The French had almost abandoned the semblance of resistance, and I saw no attempt at replying to this bombardment, which was over and past by five o'clock, and then the stillness was something painful, in contrast with the fearful din of the day. Before darkness fell the Germans had drawn back off the battle-field, and had surrounded the whole town with a cordon of artillery. The guns stood unlimbered and ready pointed at the town—24 batteries, 144 guns—a gentle hint of what were the German intentions in the morning if resistance should be persevered in.

My companion and myself had some expectation, judging from the aspect of affairs, that toward the close of the afternoon the French were concentrating for one last effort to break out in a due northerly direction; and anxious to be in the vicinity if this should occur, we had crossed the Meuse by a rope ferry at the village of Glaire, and pushed across the corpse-flecked plain into the dead-littered village of Floing at the further side. As we were clumbering up the steep on to the upland plateau, there rose suddenly, from the dense masses of troops collected on the southern swell, a hoarse roar of cheering, caught up, as if by infection, by the men of the 11th Army Corps in the bay around the mamelon, and on the plateau.

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From mouth to mouth flew the tidings that the French Emperor had sent his sword to the German King, that the whole French host were already virtually prisoners of war, and that Sedan, with all that was in it and around it, was formally to capitulate in the morning. From where we were we saw nothing of the aide-de-camp with the flag of truce, or of the grand sensational scene of his interview with the German monarch. The ferry-boat was on the wrong side of the stream, and before we got over once more to the south side, the King had set off on his return journey to Vendresse, the Crown Prince had vacated his hill and had taken the road back to Chemery, the flushed and wearied fighting men had commenced preparations for their bivouac, and the autumn twilight was fast descending. We came back past the Château Bellevue and through Frenois to Donchery. The mean town looked like a city of the dead, for every inhabitant seemed to have deserted it, save only the woman who kept the hotel. I contrived to obtain quarters in it, and presently there arrived a body of staff officers. These confirmed the tidings we had heard, but could give no specific details. A meagre supper was served, eked out by a few boxes of sardines, with which we happened to be provided, and it was being eaten when suddenly a message came that Bismarck would join the party. An officer who had constituted himself caterer went into the kitchen to see what could be procured for the great Count. Alas! the unhappy hostess, with many *mon Dieus*, protested that unless they chose to eat herself, there was nothing to be had save only eggs and bacon. On this modest fare accordingly, washed down with champagne, Bismarck made a hearty supper; but before he began to eat, he made a formal statement, reading from a despatch, to the effect that the Emperor of the French had com-

municated to the King the surrender of his sword. Bismarck reserved comments on this announcement, but led off a hearty cheer, and then, like a jovial fellow, gave the toasts of "The King," and "The Fatherland."

Before going to sleep I took a walk round the half-obliterated ramparts which surround the once fortified town of Donchery. The scene was very fine. The whole horizon was lurid with the reflection of fire. All along the valley of the Meuse, on either side, were the bivouacs of the German host. Two hundred thousand men lay here around their King. On the horizon glowed the flames of the burning villages, the flicker occasionally reflecting itself on a link of the placid Meuse. Over all the quiet moon waded through a sky cumbered with wind clouds. What were the Germans doing on this their night of triumph? Celebrating their victory by wassail and riot? No. There arose from every camp one unanimous chorus of song, but not the song of ribaldry. Verily they are a great race these Germans—a masterful, fighting, praying people; surely in many respects not unlike the men whom Cromwell led. The chaunt that filled the night air was Rinkart's hymn, the glorious—

"Nun danket alle Gott,"

the Old Hundredth of Germany. To hear this great martial orchestra singing this noble hymn under such circumstances was alone worth a journey to Sedan, with all its vicissitudes and difficulties. We had a domiciliary visit in our bed-room during the night from a couple of Generals in civil but exacting search for blankets to cover them as they lay on the floor of the *salle à manger*.

Next morning we rose with day-break, intending to get as close to Sedan as possible, that we might watch the critical state of affairs, and take the earliest oppor-

tunity of getting inside the city. Whencesoever he had come—it was rumoured that he had spent the night in Donchery—there sat on his horse at the corner of the market-place a sad-faced French general with red eyes, as if he had not slept. This I afterwards learned was General Count Reillé. Ever as he tried to wedge his horse into the narrow throat of the street leading to the bridge, and so on to the road leading to Sedan, he was baulked by the steady ceaseless stream of proviant-waggons and munition tumbrils and he smiled a weary forced smile as he drew his horse back out of the press. At length an adjutant made a way for him, and he was gone. He could not have been across the bridge when at the same corner of the market-place showed the tall form and square shoulders of Bismarck on his powerful bay horse. There was no redness about his eyes; it must have been past one in the morning when he drank his last glass of champagne in the Hôtel de Commerce, it would be rash to say how long he had been at work after that; and yet here he was before the Mairie clock had chimed the hour of six, fresh, hearty, clean-shaved, steady of hand, and clear of throat, as the voice proved in which he bade the column-men give him space to pass. He wore a blue military cloak and the undress cap of the cuirassier regiment of which he is the colonel. On such a morning where Bismarck was there for sure would there be momentous doings, and we followed in his tracks as soon as possible. We lost him, however, on the farther side of the bridge, but learnt he had ridden on toward Frenois, and so followed that road. About two kilometres beyond Donchery we met a rather shabby open carriage drawn by two horses, driven by a coachman with a gold band. It contained four French general officers, and a fifth, the one we had seen in the

market-place of Donchery, rode behind by the side of the ubiquitous Bismarck. The hour was ten minutes past seven. There was no escort, or anything, save the circumstance that the occupants of the carriage were French generals, to mark out the equipage as anything exceptional. We were barely past, when by a common impulse my companion and myself exclaimed, "That's Napoleon!" We dismounted, and returned walking behind a line of wains which were going the same way as the carriage. Sure enough, on the right-hand side of the back seat there sat the Emperor—that grey face of his, impassive and sphinxlike as ever, but with its lines drawn and deepened as if by some spasm. He wore a general's uniform, with a cavalry cloak, which was thrown open, and showed the decorations on his breast. In no other respect did he differ from his companions in dress.

The modest cavalcade went on about a hundred yards, and then halted in front of a small wayside house on the left-hand side of the road as one goes from Frenois to Donchery. The cottage into which the Emperor went on alighting was the right-hand cottage as one looks out on to the chaussée, one of a block of three mean two-storied brick houses inhabited by families of weavers. The houses stand some twenty or twenty-five feet back from the road. In their front is a narrow level of gravelled path—at the edge of this, in front of the right-hand house were placed the chairs for the Emperor and Bismarck—and then there is a grassy slope down to the ditch bounding the road. It was in obedience to a sudden request of the Emperor that the modest *cortége* halted at the wayside house. I saw him turn round in his seat, and heard the request he made to the Prussian Chancellor. Immediately on alighting, the Emperor walked hurriedly to the rear of the house, and presently re-

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turned and went inside for, at the most, five minutes. The three officers occupying the carriage had gone inside at once, and were followed by Bismarck and his mounted companion. Then the Emperor and the Chancellor came outside again and sat down on two chairs which were fetched for them by the weaver who lived downstairs. Some chairs were brought out also for the French generals, but not enough, so one or two of them lay down on the grass bank in front of the left-hand cottage, and were presently joined by several officers of the German staff. One of the French generals, the Duke de Moskowa I think, seemed to have been wounded, and dragged one of his legs heavily behind him. On a table in rear of the block of houses, there had been set out a couple of bottles of country wine with glasses, and one of the French generals, I shall not say which, kept popping round the corner to pay his devoirs to the sour tipple.

When the interview between the Emperor and Bismarck commenced—at twenty minutes past seven by my watch—Bismarck stood with cap in hand, but, as it seemed, in compliance with an injunction from Napoleon, accompanied with a bow and a slight smile, the Chancellor covered himself and sat down beside the other. Then an earnest conversation ensued. The Emperor occasionally smiled and made a remark, but it was evident that Bismarck was doing the greater part of the talking, and that, too, energetically. From our position we could just hear the murmur of Bismarck's voice when he raised it at those points where he thought it necessary to give emphasis by the gesture of bringing the forefinger of the left hand sharp down on the palm of the right. The occupant of the first floor of the right-hand cottage was all the while overlooking the pair out of his front window. Along the road streamed the ceaseless

current of a proviant column, the rude teamsters glowering greedily at the strange scene by the road-side—a scene the like of which is not in the history of our century—and exclaiming occasionally in their uncouth curiosity, "*Wo ist denn der Napoleon?*"

A little after eight von Moltke drove up from the direction of Donchery, and after joining in the conversation for a quarter of an hour, went away again. Bismarck followed him, mounted, at a sharp trot, and the French party was left to itself. The Generals remained seated in a clump. The Emperor took to stalking moodily up and down a path in the potato-plot by the side of the cottage, limping slightly as he walked, and smoking hard. After a spell of this exercise, he came and sat down among his Generals, still retaining an almost total silence, while they spoke and gesticulated with considerable animation, and, as it seemed occasionally, a little confusedness. A little after nine there came up at the trot from Donchery a half troop of the 1st Sleswig Cuirassier Regiment of Life Guards. The Cuirassiers, with trained celerity, formed a semicircle around the back of the house. The burly lieutenant dismounted two of his men, and without a glance at the sitting party or the semblance of a salute, marched them close up to the cottage-wall just behind the Emperor's chair, halted them, gave loudly the order "Draw swords," and then gave them their orders in an undertone. I noticed the Emperor glance backward at this arrangement, as if he did not half like it. There was a flush on his face, the first evidence of emotion he had manifested. At a quarter to ten Bismarck came back among the staff, which by this time had accumulated on the road in considerable numbers, and Moltke's lean face was visible in the crowd on the road. He did not seem

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to care about having more to say to the Frenchmen, and never went up the slope. Bismarck now wore his cuirassier helmet and looked quite martial, but rather heated, and no wonder, for he had taken a stretching gallop back in the direction of Vendresse to meet his master the King. The King and his two great subjects, the civilian Bismarck and the soldier Moltke, met on the road at the foot of a steep slope about four kilometres backward from Donchery toward Vendresse and Chemery. An estaminet stands just opposite the spot of meeting, the portly proprietor of which watched from a distance the hurried council of war which took place in the field by the roadside, and took the pains to mark with an axe the tree against which the King leant when the momentous consultation was in progress.

Wiping his hot face, Bismarck strode up to the sitting Emperor, and as we know now, communicated the message from his master the King, and the arrangement as to the interim disposition of the illustrious prisoner. After a short interview he beckoned to the carriage, which had drawn off a little, and the Emperor entered it, followed by the Generals, and, still escorted by the Cuirassiers, the party drove off in the direction of Sedan. I followed as fast as I could, and caught up its track as it entered the grounds of the château appropriately named Bellevue, which overlooks the plain on which stands Sedan. In the grounds a regiment of Bavarians had been bivouacking, but as the imperial party arrived they were marched out. The château consists of a centre block, with two wings joined to the centre by conservatories on the first floor. The chief front is towards the road. I was at the back of the house, but then the blinds were drawn down at the front, so I had rather the best of it. In the conservatory on the left were the French Generals;

in that on the right was the Prussian staff. In the dining-room on the ground-floor of the central block von Moltke, Bismarck, and de Wimpfen were debating the terms of the capitulation. The Emperor, I gathered, was lying down on a sofa in the drawing-room on the first floor of the central turret, or in the boudoir which opens off it. No doubt he was weary and sick at heart, while it required no very keen eyes to discern that he was in bodily pain. And that had been a long trying wait there by the wayside from seven till ten, with little truly to lighten its monotony to the stunned, crushed man. A colloquy with Bismarck, stern of heart, sharp, if courteous of speech, unyielding in resolve, for an hour or more; for another hour or more a listless kicking of heels while the man who had vanquished should pronounce what was to be done with him. He, the Emperor of the French, the proudest monarch in Europe, kicking his heels on the roadside by a weaver's cottage while a Prussian count galloped to a Prussian king for instructions! If he were not too stunned to think at all, he must have thought at times as he lay there that surely the morning's doings were one ghastly dream.

The deliberations as to the negotiations seemed likely, by the rumours which reached us, to last for some time, and quitting the precincts of the Château Bellevue, my companion and myself utilised the interval in visiting the battle-field. The tract charged over by the Chasseurs d'Afrique was a scene of terrible carnage. The Arab stallions ridden by this force had died very hard; in many cases they had with their struggles made graves before they had died for their riders and themselves. The burial parties did not have much trouble hereabouts in bringing corpses to the grave-pits. The difficulty was to clear a space on which to commence a grave-pit. Higher

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up on the tableland there was fearful evidence of the power of a shell-fire at short range. I counted five headless corpses within two hundred yards—their heads had been blown away as clean as if they had been guillotined. Men disembowelled, with their chests driven into fragments, with legs or arms blown away, were common spectacles. I found one man's leg about twenty-five paces distant from his body. Right on the battle-field we came on a friendly quartermaster, who was superintending the collection of biscuit barrels and wine casks that the French had left behind them in their hurried retreat. He placed at our service the contents of a barrel of biscuits, the outside of which was stained by a fluid which was red, but was not wine; but bucket staves are not sponges, and the biscuits were very good, and we were very hungry.

After hurriedly traversing a corner of the battle-field my companion and myself determined to take our chance of being able to visit Sedan. We found German outposts, consisting of three men each, near the transverse passages leading through the glacis, and close to them bodies of Frenchmen without arms, who chatted freely with the German sentries. We got on to the glacis of the fortress with the greatest ease in the world, and found the soldiers lying on it to consist chiefly of Turcos and Zouaves, dirty fellows most of them, but certainly in better case to all appearance than the troops we found inside. Everybody was very friendly; wine was genially pressed on us, all the more warmly when we mentioned that we were Englishmen. One especially greasy and strong-smelling Turco, of a full Day-and-Martin colour, insisted vehemently on kissing us, and we had to submit to the oleaginous hug with what grace we might. Getting into the town was a different matter. The gates

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were closed, and opened only to admit the wounded as they were brought in on waggons. By the advice of this friendly Turco, who set us the example, we jumped on one of the waggons and passed in without interference. As rapidly as we could for the chaotic press, we traversed several streets of the town. We saw where MacMahon lay wounded, and also how full the town was of troops. They were swarming, densely packed, everywhere. Of the wounded, some were in the churches, the houses, and the public buildings, others lying unheeded and jostled in the courtyards; the dead were everywhere—in the gutters, trampled on by the living, on the swampy margin of the moat, littering the narrow way through the glacis and the fortifications, lying, some of them, on the steps of a church. The sight was one never to be forgotten—a sight of misery, chaos, disorganization, and general devilry, which assuredly was unique in this generation—an eddying sea of humanity, trampling recklessly over the dead and the wounded, the men now yelling for the blood of their officers, now struggling in fierce contention for a morsel of bread.

Hastening back to the Château Bellevue, we were yet too late for the announcement of the signature of the capitulation. We had seen nothing of that sensational incident—if it really did occur—when von Moltke, as is related, led outside the reluctant de Wimpfen, and weakened his obduracy by pointing to the ring of field guns unlimbered, and with the gunners in position, girdling the fated city, and ready at the word to commence a bombardment which would have been the synonyme for a butchery. But we were just in time with a sharp run to see the King up to the gates of the château, followed by his son and the leading members of his staff, and to see the silent greeting—if words were spoken

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they must have been muttered in a low tone by men afraid to trust their voices—between the monarchs on the gravelled drive at the bottom of the steps. The "good brothers" turned, and mounting the steps, disappeared inside one of the rooms in the central block, the royal staff partly occupying one of the conservatories, partly remaining outside. The interview, that surely must have sorely tried the composure of both the parties to it, lasted barely some twenty minutes, and then Wilhelm was out and off in his carriage for a drive through his victorious Kinder bivouacking by the Meuse. He who was left in that inner room must have heard the air throb again with the cheering which came from German throats at the sight of the white-haired conqueror-king. Later in the afternoon I saw the Emperor again. He came out in front of the château to superintend the unpacking of his travelling carriage. He looked very wan and weary, although he still kept up the old impassible look. The imperial equipage in its magnificence was an extraordinary contrast to the simplicity of the modest turnout of the Prussian King. In gold and scarlet the outriders of the former glittered profusely. He of Prussia had his postboys in shoddy cloth, with glazed coverings to their hats to keep the dust off the nap.

The Emperor's barber, with whom I had a chat as the suite waited for orders outside the château, gave me some interesting particulars regarding the last disastrous day in Sedan. The French army, he said, had its efficiency destroyed by socialism and a craving for a republic. It was in a chronic state of semi-mutiny, and many regiments would not follow their officers on any consideration. This yeasty condition of agitation made discipline an impossibility, and accounted for the disregard of discipline on their part, which had enabled the Germans so

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often to surprise their camps and drive them whithersoever they listed. MacMahon was wounded in a vain attempt to excite one of these disaffected regiments to charge. The Emperor met him in the street as he was being carried half unconscious into his quarters. If my informant was truthful, Napoleon bore himself worthily during the disastrous day. Imitating his uncle at Montereau, he directed guns with his own hand, and was continually under fire. But the French were totally outmanœuvred and outnumbered. They had expected to have to cope with an army of 120,000 men; instead of this, nearly double the number started up unexpectedly, as if from the ground. The troops in Sedan candidly admitted to me that the Germans were better soldiers than themselves, although not braver men; and this is about the truth of the matter. They have a sense of responsibility which the French want; they are splendid marchers, they fight like devils, they are strong, self-contained, self-respecting, earnest, manly fellows; they have generals who know how to direct them, and officers who know how to lead them, and this is why they came to go on accordingly from victory to victory.

Next morning (the 3rd September), we tried to get through Sedan with intent to go a little way into Belgium. There was thoroughfare only one way and for one class of persons. The gate was surrounded by a guard of Bavarians, and a continuous stream of French prisoners, horse, foot, and artillery, was fast passing out. We watched it for hours—it seemed as if it never would stint, and at last we abandoned the intention of getting through Sedan, and turned down the stream to the rope ferry which we had used the two previous days. When we got to the bridge over the canal, we came again upon the stream of French prisoners, flowing in the direction

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we were going. The tract between the canal and the Meuse is an island of some extent. The rope of the ferry was cut, and the boat on the other side. Skirting the Meuse downward for some distance, we found several ferries, but all the boats were, like the first, on the other side of the stream. The fact was, the Germans had utilised the island into a prison. They had turned the disarmed French army bodily into it to the number of some 70,000, looking to the Meuse and the canal to do the main duty of custodianship. It is true that here and there on the farther side there stood a company under arms, and that towards nightfall a chain of sentries was run along the farther banks; but I do not believe that on the island itself there was a single German. The Frenchmen had been turned on to the island just as they came out of the town. The Germans themselves were temporarily short of rations, and could spare nothing for their prisoners. But the prisoners fared better than their captors, although goodness knows how they did it. After all nobody can achieve a savoury mess under difficulties like a Frenchman, or build himself a house where another man would have to be content with the heavens for his roof. Innumerable fires had been lit, about one seemingly serving three men. The fellows dragged out firewood from recondite corners in the most marvellous manner; recklessly tore down houses, and burnt doors, window frames, and rafters; broke up carts, ploughs, fences, and everything else available. On every fire was a saucepan, and in the saucepan were potatoes, and something else. Where the potatoes came from was plain enough; we could see the fellows delving them, but about the "something else," all that one could tell was that it smelt nice. There was a flavour of onions in the scent—I began to think Frenchmen have an onion bed

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somewhere about their persons—and a *soupçon* of garlic and a gamey whiff that made one's mouth water. Most of the men who were not cooking were building unto themselves habitations for the night. About half of them had their *tentes d'abris*, which they were rigging up dexterously, and bedding with boughs torn from the trees. The trees were put under heavier contributions to build wherewithal leafy bowers of considerable architectural pretensions, and positively I do not think that, with the exception of the extremely late-comers, a single man of the captive French army slept this first night supperless and without some cover. They were the civilest, cheeriest, best-humoured set of fellows imaginable. We two, quite alone, and unable to bestow anything—for our flasks and tobacco-pouches were but drops in the bucket, and very soon exhausted—experienced no word but of the frankest courtesy and the heartiest friendliness, alike from officers and men. The officers had been allowed to retain their swords, having given their parole, but had to accompany their men, whose disarmament had been very thorough. On the island is a handsome château, with beautiful and extensive grounds, and of the cover there afforded the Frenchmen took avail extensively. I do not suppose that in the island they had much more room than in Sedan, but they preferred it for quarters, since they could get firewood and potatoes. A few stray barrels of biscuit had been brought into the island on carts, and their contents were distributed as far as they would go, but there was not a biscuit for every twenty men of the great multitude. After some conversation with a group of captains in the grounds of the château, we strolled down towards the river, and accepted the invitation of a bivouac of Zouaves to join them at their supper. The mess was better than good, it was

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superb. It consisted of potatoes, the indescribable savoury "something," and flesh of some kind or other. The swarthy Zouaves, in their red fezes and baggy canvas breeches, treated us like princes, but evaded a direct reply to the question what was the meat in their mess. After we had bidden the merry rascals a hearty good night, we came upon the carcass of a horse that had been killed by a shell, and there was a clean slice or two out of its flanks. I did not think it necessary to go back to the Zouaves and put it to them point blank whether they had been regaling us on horse; but, like the man in the play, I had my own thoughts on the matter. It was late before we quitted the fires on the island; and when we were once outside and realised the difficulty of finding quarters, we were sorry we had not stayed and shared the bivouac of the Zouaves. Donchery we knew to have been invaded by a whole Army Corps; Frenois was seething full of Bavarians. As we were discussing the probabilities of a bivouac we drove past the front of the Château Bellevue. All was in darkness. A happy thought struck my companion. "Let us sleep here," he cried. The gardener seemed glad enough to have a couple of quiet civilians for his inmates. He stabled our horse and conducted ourselves into the château, one of the most beautiful residences, both internally and externally, I have ever seen. The dining hall, where the capitulation was signed, was a model of taste without meretricious display. It was wholly in stained oak, save the roof, which is inlaid with American maple. The windows were Gothic, and in niches round the room there were alternately mirrors and Etruscan vases. One or two large pictures were let into the panelling, and in recesses were divans. The chairs were high backed, in finely carved oak. Above this room, up a winding staircase, and on the

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first-floor, was the bedroom occupied by the Emperor on the previous night, just in the state he left it. Before leaving at nine in the morning, he had breakfasted with his suite in the dining hall. On its beauties, as on those of the rest of the charming villa, we were free to feast; there was nothing else to satisfy the appetite. The gardener was very hungry himself and so was his wife. Nor, according to the gardener, was there a drop of wine in the house, and appearances certainly seemed to corroborate his asseveration. It fell to me to sleep in the bed occupied by the Emperor on the previous night. Sheets and a quilt were on the bed, but one of the window hangings, with its semicircular canopy, had been torn down, and applied as an additional covering for the couch of the Emperor. He had apparently been reading in bed, for a translation of Lord Lytton's "Last of the Barons" lay open turned on its face, on a little table by the bed-head. There seemed something of a sombre significance in the selection.

At this time the château was inviolate; not so much as an ornament had been touched. The beautiful clocks ticked on every mantel-piece, and the pretty knick-knacks of the young ladies were sticking on the pin-cushions in their abandoned bedrooms. But about five in the morning there was an incursion of a Bavarian regiment, which during the night had been on guard over the prisoners on the island. Beyond doubt they did not use the place tenderly. The Bavarians are, out of sight, the most butter-fingered of the German soldiers, and anything conveniently portable they annexed with neatness and despatch. What the men wanted was wine, and what seemingly wanton damage they did to the wainscot, panelling, &c., was in quest of it, a quest in the end crowned with success.

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By the 6th of September the King of Prussia was in Rheims the self-constituted guest of the Most Reverend the Archbishop in that ecclesiastical dignitary's palace, hard by the historical old cathedral. There had been but a short stay for the German hosts on the field where they gained laurels so green and yet so bloody. The blood tint had hardly died out of the Meuse, the unburied dead yet festered in the sunheat, and the ruins of Bazeilles yet smoked and stank, when the vanguard of the Crown Prince's army shouldered their packs and trudged away up the valleys of the Argonnes towards the fertile vinelands of Champagne, marching nearly due southward but with their faces ever set Paris-ward, and "Nach Paris!" ever on their lips. Royal head-quarters made a long pause in the old cathedral city, while men all over Europe were asking one another whether the catastrophe of Sedan had not virtually ended the war, and looking for the white dove of peace to alight on the blood-stained battle-field. But the Revolution had taken place in Paris, and the leaders of the new Republic were flushed with the chimera that Republican institutions and untrained hordes of patriots, which at the talismanic name of "Republic" were sure to rush to arms eager to fight and proud to die for *la Patrie* emancipated, could cope with the generalship and the trained and victorious armies that had crunched the disciplined soldiers of the Empire as a boy cracks a nut. It was from the crisis of Sedan that may be dated the falling away of British sympathy from the German side. Wise and considerate men at home, who in the beginning had seen and readily owned to the justice of the cause in which Germany had fought and conquered, let their reason and their logical perception become enfeebled by a sympathy for misfortune which did honour to their hearts. With others the key-

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note to the changed feeling was kindliness for a Republic, a gushing abstract love for an institution which they reckoned a synonym for the truest of all national liberty. A judicious alternative to this mild phase of mental aberration might have been discovered in an enforced residence in Paris during the months of March and April last. When Wilhelm went to war in the name of the German Fatherland, he put forth that he warred not with the people but with its ruler. That ruler gone, he was bound to look to some person or to some body, as the successor of the captive Emperor in some kind of right or other to dispose of the destinies of France. He could not make peace with the French nation in the gross; that nation must set up, whether for peace or for war, something tangible to be treated with by the victor, if it was to be peace; to direct war, if the nation's fiat was for war. The Provisional Government assumed this province, and was tacitly accepted by France. Then the nation through this, its mouthpiece, instead of suing for peace, instead of asking what terms it might expect if it should sit down content with the punishment it had received, cried "War, war to the hilt, war without a thought, a dream, a hint of negotiation!" Wilhelm had no help for it, but to accept what was virtually a new challenge, and fight on. And that challenge gave to him a new antagonist. He now fought, no longer with the man who was his prisoner, but with the French nation, with whom up till then he had proclaimed that he had no quarrel, and he fought with it, because it had taken up the quarrel that might have gone with the *Déchéance*, and made it its own. The German did not quit his first position; France and the French drove him out of it whether he would or not. There was no alternative but to march on defiant Paris. Sympathy is a beautiful feel-

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ing; but its failing is that very often it clouds discrimination. Under the influence of effusive sympathy for France, who has not heard men plead—"Ah, but in the hour of her triumph Germany might have shown her magnanimity and offered terms to poor France, instead of coldly standing at attention waiting for her beaten foe to humiliate herself by suing for terms." For Germany to have acted thus would not have been magnanimity; it would have been quixotry, and quixotry certain to have been misinterpreted by France. Because the German arms only occupied as a formality a corner of Paris for a couple of days, did not Paris send up the defiantly-complacent yelp that it was fear which had made the occupation so transient and partial? Can international history point to a precedent in which the unquestioned victor, unweakened either by a single reverse or by a long war, fighting in a cause acknowledged as just by all the world, took the initiative in offering terms, either directly or indirectly, to an adversary so stubborn and haughty that it seemed like enough the profferer would have had them flung back in his teeth? Who ever heard of the gladiator in the arena, or the pugilist in the ring cry, "Hold, surely there is enough," while the opponent proclaimed himself still full of fighting, and refused to be led away by what in this case was an Europeful of judicious bottle holders?

While the King abode in Rheims, waiting for what never came, and while Europe was talking and scheming, and France was hardening her heart and stiffening her neck, the German armies were deploying into a grand line for the advance on Paris. Three great roads converge toward Paris from the east of France. On the southernmost of these leading from Châlons, through Tour de Montaimé, by Montmirail, Coulommiers,

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Chaulmes, and Brie Comte Robert, the head-quarters of the Crown Prince of Prussia it was arranged should march. The northern route is *viâ* Laon, Soissons and Dammartin, but the fortresses of the two first-named towns still held out, so that the 12th Army Corps and the Prussian Guards had tracks farther to the south perforce allotted to them. The central road from Châlons through Epernay is cut near Dormans, by the road that comes from Rheims, by Ville en Tardenoise, and thence continues its course through the beautiful valley of the Marne, threading successively, as in a string, the pretty towns of Château Thierry, La Ferté sous Jouarre and Meaux. Meaux was a pretty town once before the deluge came upon it. This central road was set down as common property for the right flank of the fourth army and the left flank of the third. Along it lay the track of the 6th Army Corps, which, spared at Sedan, was to head the advance on Paris. Later it was to be traversed by the 2nd Bavarians, and later still by the 11th Army Corps, which had been left in the rear when its fellows marched out of the valley of the Meuse.

Dispositions covering a front so extensive, and having an object so vast and so momentous, were not made in a day. The men had to be rested after feats of fighting and marching not surpassed in the history of the world; supplies had to be accumulated near; communications had to be everywhere perfected and made good. Meanwhile the King took his ease in the archbishop's palace. Bismarck, in his yellow and white cap, stalked about the town alone, disregarding with a grim indifference the crowds of beggar boys who fancied they could recognise benevolence in the fact that they were not summarily sworn at by reason of their importunity, and only found out their mistake when they had haunted the stern man

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persistently to no purpose for half the length of a street. Moltke paced the aisles of the cathedral for hours at a time, with set face and abstracted eye, his hands ever clasped behind his back. Captains and subalterns, dashing Freiwilligen and gay Vicefeldwebel, made merry over the flowing champagne in the hotels and cafés, and wished that there was a Rheims at every halting spot. The soldiers ate and drank, sauntered and stared; dealing justly in uncouth and fragmentary French with the shopkeepers of the town, and essaying in a sheepish way to make a little love to the girls, whose coquetry overcame even the conventional hatred. But although *festina lente* was the motto, there was no time to be wasted. On the 7th of September General von Tümpling, commanding the 6th army corps, had already his headquarters in Dormans. The German Uhlans who, when they had ridden into Rheims on the Sunday previous, had all but seen the backs of Vinoy's men retreating, were far up the valley feeling the front at least two days before I reached Dormans on the 8th of September. I wonder how many British tourists are familiar with the rich, placid beauty of the valley of the Marne, otherwise than as seen from the window of a railway carriage. It will amply repay a much more detailed inspection. On the afternoon I climbed a little hill above Dormans, which overlooks the valley for several miles in both directions, and the view well repaid the exertion. On either side of the river lie flat and fertile "haughs," as the alluvial tracts are called in Scotland; and out of them rise almost imperceptibly the swelling knolls clad with vineyards in which the frequent villages nestle snugly. I counted ten villages from my hill-top. The whole valley was as quiet as if there was nothing but peace in the world. Presently,

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from one of the villages over against me, there arose the swell of military music; the band of a regiment was quartered in it, and was treating the villagers to a concert. I do not think I ever saw such a wealth of fruit of all kinds as there was around Dormans. For the first time I realised how the Israelites might have been compelled to resort to a stake borne by two men to carry wherewithal the trusses of grapes from the vines of Eshcol. Apples and pears hung by the roadside like hips and haws in our hedgerows at home, alternated by trees laden with delicious golden plums. It made one glad that the troops were marching in peace through the valley of Dormans. It would have been desecration to sully this Eden by making it a battle-field. A quiet race were the people of the valley, sighing for quietude and for liberty, without plebiscites, and without severe taxation, to till their soil and live prosperously in their quiet way. They craved a strong and moderate Government, be it what it might—monarchy or republic. The landlady of an auberge where I halted for a short time put the matter to me very pithily. "I don't care a sou about politics," said she, "and we have been taught to abhor the Prussians, and specially to detest Bismarck; but, oh, how heartily do I wish that in France we had such a one as Bismarck!"

Now that the strain of the forced marching was somewhat abated, it was instructive to note how the Germans were resuming their rigour in little matters of detail and discipline. I saw the officer of the day turn out the quarter-guard the evening I arrived in Dormans, and he bullied the men as if the regiment had been in barracks, because their buttons were not polished and their coat-cuffs not turned down. The soldiers were everywhere brushing and beating their clothes, or mending holes in

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them. In a shoemaker's shop there was a comical-looking row of soldiers, all sitting solemnly against the wall, each with a boot in his hand, waiting for his turn with the funny little French shoemaker, of whose continual jabber they understood not one word, but courteously replied with the invariable "Ja! Ja!" The Dormans tailor was hard at work repairing officers' uniforms; I wonder whether he was patriotic enough not to utilise the "cabbage."

Von Tümpling seemed in no hurry to advance from Dormans. Had he been dallying in Rheims, one might have apprehended that he had found his Capua, but pleasant place as was Dormans, every one said there were more eligible quarters and equally beautiful spots farther down the valley of the Marne. The truth is he was waiting till the 3rd army on his left should get approximately abreast of him. He was certainly near enough to his own front. On the 9th we started off with intent to make Château Thierry before we halted. About eighteen kilometres from Dormans we came to a bridge. The bridge itself was sound enough, but on the other side of it an embankment on which the road was made had been cut across by a trench. This was evidently the work of an enemy, but of an enemy destitute of the guidance of engineers, and ignorantly eager to oppose the German progress. As might have been expected, the pitiful trench had been no great obstacle. It had been partially and hastily bridged, and thus we knew that friends were still ahead. About a kilometre farther we entered the village of Crezancy. Nobody had anything to say to us as we passed through the village; but when we got on the top of the hill beyond it, we found a sergeant's guard along with an officer. The latter told us that the post was the extreme infantry advance, and that we must

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not pass it. A few horsemen were scouting farther, but he had no assurance as to the state of the country, and he could not allow us to go on any farther. He was a fixture, he understood, for the day, and the forward movement had for the time been arrested. So there was no resource but to return to Dormans, where we learned that the head-quarters of the 6th Corps were not to move till the 11th, and perhaps not then.

Impatient of the inaction, it occurred to us on the morning of the 9th to start off in a southerly direction, inclining a little to the rear, so that thus we should strike the head of the more southerly advance. The place where we intersected the first east and west road was a village called Igny-le-Jard. There were no Germans there, and the villagers said they had seen none but a few scattered Uhlans. Our road then lay through a fine forest, intersected with rides for hunting purposes, and full of deer. At Mareaille, on its farther side, we came upon an advanced infantry-post—there was nothing beyond except cavalry, said the officer who commanded the handful of men. A few miles farther to the south, and we reached the charming village of Corbellieu, lying snugly by the little river Surmelin. In the environs was a beautiful château, surrounded with grounds, everywhere adorned with parterres of flowers, and intersected by artificial streams and lakes, crossed by bridges of fanciful construction. For miles the road lay through avenues of fine trees, on either side of which were rich farms or beautiful villas. We had passed Corbellieu for some miles, still edging rearward, when the towers of a castle became visible, and soon we entered the pretty village of Montmort, at the end of which, raised high over it on an eminence, partly natural and partly artificial, stands the castle of the same name. At one time, I doubt not,

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a castle of great strength must have occupied the summit of the commanding eminence. The site is one which the castle-builders of the middle ages must have thoroughly appreciated. From the wall encircling the esplanade I dropped an apple sheer into the street, two hundred feet below; a double moat surrounds the abrupt height, the top of which is reached externally by winding paths; internally, by a winding staircase up a turret built into the rock. The castle itself is comparatively modern. It was the property and the residence of the Marquis de Montmort, who, along with his daughter, had very sensibly remained at home to receive the Germans instead of running away into Paris. He had for his guests the head-quarters of a brigade of the 5th Army Corps, the officers of which, in consideration of the courtesy of the Marquis in doing the honours of his own house, exerted all their efforts to prevent intrusion on his privacy and towards the preservation of the amenities of the charming place.

Quitting Montmort we pushed on a few miles farther south to Etoges, which is on the great road. No German sentries were posted outside of it. We traversed it from one end to the other, and found it wholly French. Having left our carriage at the village auberge, we strolled towards a fine château in the environs, at the gate of which a courteous French gentleman accosted us. He was the son of the owner of the château, M. de Kirchener, son of an engineer officer who distinguished himself greatly in the Prussian service in the campaigns of 1813 and 1814. M. de Kirchener is himself married to a sister of the Duchess de Montebello. The old gentleman himself came out to meet us, in a little trepidation, and knotting around his waist as he came a scarf of the "Succour for the Wounded" pattern. The father and

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son courteously joined in urging our removal from the auberge to the more pleasant quarters which the château afforded; and there we spent the night with not a German soldier, so far as we knew, nearer to us than the outposts outside Montmort. There were, however, German troops nearer Paris than Etoges, two squadrons of cavalry having passed through it in the morning.

Next morning (the 10th) we started westward for Montmirail, with intent to traverse a district memorable in the first campaign of 1814 as that in which, in a rapid series of battles within a very small space, Napoleon destroyed the army of Blücher. Soon after quitting Etoges we came upon the fine plain of Champ Aubert, on which was fought the battle of the 10th February, 1814. A monument stands in the centre of the battle-field, erected by "the Emperor Napoleon III." A couple of kilometres farther on we reached the village of Vauchamps, outside which took place the battle of the same name on the 14th February, in which Blücher's discomfiture was consummated. Passing through the pretty little town of Montmirail, we crossed a deep gorge and came out on a noble plateau, almost on the verge of which stands a fine fluted column, surmounted by a gilded eagle and bearing on its pedestal the announcement, dated 15th August, 1866, that "this monument was erected by the orders of the Emperor Napoleon III. to indicate the spot on which stood the Emperor Napoleon I. when he directed the efforts of the French army in the battle of Montmirail on the 11th February, 1814." On the other sides of this pretentious monument are the names of the other victories:—Feb. 12th, Les Caquerets, Nesle, Château Thierry; Feb. 11th, Montmirail, Marchais; Feb. 10th, Champ Aubert; Feb. 14th, Vauchamps.

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At Montmirail we passed through the advance brigade of the 5th Army Corps, which we had seen in Montmort the day before. The previous day had been a rest day, and the troops were fresh and thoroughly in good condition and spirits. About six miles in front of Montmirail, at a village called Vieuxmaisons, we found the battalion quartering itself which constituted the vanguard. There was nothing beyond except a few cavalry outposts, and although it was ascertained that there were no French troops in the immediate front, there was reason to believe, the officer told us, that there were detached little parties rancorously scouring the country, who might be more awkward customers for people like ourselves to encounter than regular soldiery. His advice coincided with our own opinion that we had got to the end of our tether on this lower road. There would be a further advance next day, no doubt, but in the meantime Vieuxmaisons afforded nothing whatever calculated to sustain life, it having borne the brunt of a squadron of hussars on the previous night. The officers of the 58th, a fine Silesian regiment, made us heartily welcome to a share of their rations, but thought it advisable to regain the valley of the Marne. So with a hearty farewell to the good fellows of the Posener Regiment, we struck across the low sierras to Château Thierry, crossing as we did so the scene of the battle of Nesle and close to Château Thierry the battle-field of the same name, where Napoleon annihilated the remains of the corps of Sacken, which he had beaten previously at Montmirail; and on our arrival found that von Tümpling's head-quarters had come on into Château Thierry in the course of the afternoon. Château Thierry was taken and retaken several times, and three times sacked in the campaign of 1814, but had long lost the traces of its early misfortunes. On the

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occasion of the present visit of the Prussians there was no sack, and, indeed, very little scarcity. The people had for the most part stayed at home, and, disregarding the lies of the French newspapers as to the conduct of the German troops, had laid in goodly stores of eatables and drinkables, for which they found a ready market, at no doubt remunerative prices. A sagacious citizen told me he would not at all mind if the Prussians were to stop a month in the place, for they were far better customers than French soldiers, and most of the population seemed to be much of his mind. The officers chiefly frequented the Café du Midi, close to the Hôtel de l'Eléphant on the esplanade, and consumed their beer and coffee much as if they had been in the Fatherland. In this place I saw the first manifestation of a feeling of impotent insolence on the part of Frenchmen. As most readers are doubtless aware, it is the custom in Germany to bow to the company on entering a café, and to remain uncovered while the stay lasts. While the café was at its fullest two young Frenchmen of the town entered with some noise, and without any recognition of the company laid hold of cues and monopolised the only billiard-table. At first they were unobserved by the German officers, but their loud laughter and exclamations presently attracted attention. Each wore his cap cocked on his head, and they two were the only covered persons in the room. A German lieutenant quietly arose, and removing the cap of one of them made him a bow, quietly said, "Pardon, Monsieur," hung the cap on a peg, and sat down. The young fellow looked as if he would fain be angry if he dared, but thought better of it, and went on with his game. His companion did not take the hint, but cocked his cap all the more defiantly, and I heard him whisper to his companion that he would

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not have stood the insult if offered to himself. A German officer sitting near me heard this too. He got up, walked solemnly to the Frenchman, took off his cap, chucked it out of the door, looked the Frenchman in the face for a minute, and then went back to his seat. The young fellow made a lame attempt to explain that he wore his cap because he had a cold, but nobody noticed him, and the pair went off, looking as impudent as they thought was safe.

On the 12th the head-quarters of the 6th Corps moved forward to the village of Nogent l'Artaud; but as several regiments had gone forward, we did so too, in hopes of being able to spend the night in La Ferté sous Jouarre. From Nogent the valley of the Marne is exceptionally beautiful and fertile. The villages are plentiful and full of good houses, lavishly decked with flowers, and every slope is covered with vineyards. At times the valley is so narrow that there is room only for the river and the road, and the railway has to betake itself into a tunnel; then it widens into a charming flat on which lies a pretty village. I do not think that I ever saw a more beautiful village, both externally and internally, than Charly, about two miles west of Nogent. Almost all the houses were villas, and they stood embowered among trees amid a wealth of flowers. The soldiers, of which the place was full, seemed imbued with the influence of its beauty, and respected its amenity as far as was possible. From Charly we went forward to Croutes, and then on to Luzancy, where we found the 51st Regiment quartered, and then we knew that there was no La Ferté for us that night. The 51st constitute the extreme infantry advance, and whenever one saw it one might be sure there is nothing further but a handful of horsemen.

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Luzancy, a very little place, was full to repletion. We returned, therefore, to Croutes, and found as much crowding there; so, instead of retracing our steps to Nogent, we crossed the Marne and made for the railway station of Nanteuil-Saacy, which we saw opposite with a couple of houses beside it. One of the houses was deserted and stripped. In the other we found a man and his wife, but the lady was doing her duty by her country in this its hour of need by adding a unit to its population. In these circumstances we took up our quarters in the waiting-room of the station, sleeping on the seats, and lighting our fire to boil our coffee-water with a basketful of used tickets. Next morning we came on to La Ferté in advance of head-quarters.

The white fog so characteristic of the Marne valley was still hanging over the pretty town of La Ferté, when, about half-past four in the morning of Wednesday the 14th, we drove over the quaint old bridge on our road forward to Meaux. All round lay the 6th Army Corps, the honest fellows still slumbering soundly in the semi-darkness. As we drove forward through the fog, there were but few signs of our having been preceded by any large body of men. As day broke, the soft roadsides showed tokens of having been trodden by cavalry, and the hoof-prints had not been beaten out, as they invariably were, when infantry men had come tramping after the horsemen. Seven miles beyond La Ferté, still in the thick fog, we reached the village of Trilport, about three miles from Meaux, and here were a few men of the 51st, and a slender guard in front of the Mairie. The sentry shouted something unintelligible as we passed him—it was not "Halt!" and so we did not care to pull up. But when we had traversed quite half the fine bridge which forms a continuation of the little town, a

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"Halt!" in loud and peremptory tones, came from a dim figure half obscured by the fog. It came again still sharper and louder as we continued to advance, our horse having a good deal of way on him. Then the figure stretched out an arm, and, snatching the bridle, sent the animal back on his haunches, shouting as he did so, "Donnerwetter! can't you see the bridge is down?" Down it certainly was, and very near down were we, too, in the fog. The arch nearest Meaux, one of considerable span, had been utterly shattered by gunpowder, and the débris lay in the water, creating quite a tempestuous little rapid. As we were thanking and questioning the sentry, a gust of wind suddenly swept the fog away, and there became visible, two hundred yards or so up stream, the wreck of the fine railway bridge, all three arches of which had been blown up. Gaunt and grim stood the shattered arches in the sombre light of the morning, contrasting strangely in the sullen ruin of their appearance with the busy scene in the intervening space. The pioneers of the 6th Corps were just finishing a bridge which they had hastily improvised. A pontoon train was hourly expected, but meanwhile the pioneers with their axes had constructed a very creditable pile bridge. Now they were causeweying the approaches to the timber platform with grassy sods sliced from the bank. It was good to see the system and purpose with which everyone worked. An officer stood by formally to superintend operations, but he seldom needed to take the cigar from his mouth to utter an order. The division of labour principle was carried out to its fullest extent, and the result was speed, order, and efficiency. As a special favour, this gentleman permitted our carriage to cross before the bridge was quite finished, and in advance of a battery of artillery, the horses of which were

champing their bits with impatience at the halt in the chill morning air.

The broken bridges on the Marne, at Trilport, were not the only obstacles which the French engineers had attempted to interpose between the Germans and Meaux. There was the tunnel at Nanteuil, a really serious impediment. Had all the French operations on this line been as thorough as this, the German advance would have been materially delayed. But in other cases the engineers must either have been consummately stupid or have built largely on a supposititious stupidity on the part of the Germans. When they destroyed the bridges in the direct line, they invariably left standing some convenient substitute capable of being utilised by the easy expedient of going a few hundred yards either right or left. Thus a mile beyond the Trilport ruin a bridge on the canal had also been destroyed. But a wily Uhlan had ridden down the towing-path till he came to a handy if rather narrow wooden structure, about half a mile to the left, and then come back on to the chaussée, and chalked on a convenient post the laconic but intelligible word "Links." "Links" (left) we went accordingly, crossed the canal, and reached the outskirts of Meaux, where there was another bridge down. This time the direction was "Rechts," and obedience to it soon brought us into the town, where there were nothing as yet but a regiment of hussars and a few sergeants that had come on in advance to take up quarters in the town and the neighbouring villages for the troops. In the course of the afternoon the greater part of the 6th Army Corps arrived in the neighbourhood of Meaux; comparatively few men, however, being quartered in the town itself, in anticipation of the accommodation requisite for Royal head-quarters, which were expected from Château Thierry

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next day. General von Tümpling had his head-quarters at Quincy Segy, a little village with a beautiful château, about six kilometres to the south of Meaux, but divided from it by a more serious obstacle than the trivial distance, in the shape of a destroyed bridge on a branch of the canal. A Jäger regiment formed the infantry foreposts in a line of villages, the centre of which was Claye, about five miles to the front; and the 8th and 9th Regiments of hussars were on patrol and vedette duty out to the front of the Jägers. They had pushed reconnaissances as near to Paris as the village of Gagny, close under Fort Nogent, and their report was that there was no French force outside the ring of forts. But there had been a few trifling skirmishes between detachments of French cavalry covering the engineers in their work of destruction, and the German patrols. Two or three German dragoons had been shot and a few French prisoners taken. And the 5th Army Corps' advance guard lay around Coulommiers, considerably to the left rear. To the north, and also rather in the rear, was the bulk of the Maas army, but its cavalry were reported to have pushed patrols on the north-west, close up to Gonesse and Montmorency.

On the morning of the 16th, while riding out to the cavalry foreposts in company with a hussar officer, we suddenly came, on the great road in front of Claye, on a little posse of French lancers, following a civilian who carried a white flag. On the top of a little knoll the lancers halted, and then retreated, leaving the "parlementaire" to come forward alone. When he came within hail, it turned out that he was the Second Secretary of the British Legation in Paris, and the bearer of a communication from Lord Lyons to Count Bismarck. He got a mount from one of the hussars, who vacated his

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saddle for the purpose, and was escorted into the camp by a sergeant and a couple of men. Great interest was naturally excited among the German troops when the news spread of the advent of a "parlementaire." A report had been current a couple of days before that the defence of Paris was abandoned, and although that had been contradicted, a wide-spread belief existed that the Parisians were not prepared when confronted with the actual realities of a siege, to let the matter go to extremities. The arrival of the English secretary was accepted as in support of this view, and everybody was anxious for the King and Bismarck to come on toward the front. The Royal head-quarters arrived early in the afternoon of the same day, and I learned, however, in the course of the evening, from a reliable source, that Mr. Malet was the bearer of a communication emanating, in the first instance, from Lord Granville, having for its object that proposal relative to mediation which led to the historical interviews at Ferrières, which Jules Favre terminated by futile gasconade.

Mr. Malet was courteous enough to give a few details regarding the condition of Paris, and the incidents of his journey from the capital to the German foreposts. He described Paris as being in a seething and excited condition, with divided councils, and a huge mass of pseudo-soldiery, the individual bravery of each individual component part of which might be unquestionable, but the general discipline of which was so loose and flaccid as almost to disentitle, in his opinion, the body of semi-armed men to the appellation of soldiers. He had spent a night on his road, and the Gardes Mobiles where he halted had made the cheerful suggestion that he should sleep "under the beautiful stars." Mr. Malet, reserving the question whether he would have any objection to sleep "under

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the beautiful stars," if they were visible, pointed out the fact that they were not, and requested other sleeping accommodation than that afforded by the earth as a mattress and the sky as a canopy. This he ultimately obtained, his escort sleeping in the adjoining shed. He saw evidences of the most flagrant disregard of discipline on the part of the troops lying outside the defences of Paris. The men coolly refused to get up and take their turn of duty on guard when ordered to do so by their officers, although, to judge from appearances, there would have been no hesitation had the order been to get up and go into action. It says not a little for Trochu that he could have constructed a measurably serviceable army out of materials so unpromising.

Mr. Malet returned towards Paris next morning, leaving in the same way as he had come, under an escort of German hussars. Those who knew the nature of the risk he ran felt considerable apprehension for his safety. In the course of the morning the French had fired upon two flags of truce, and it was just a chance if Mr. Malet should be recognized. However, he got among the defenders of Paris without detriment, and, as we afterwards learnt, reached the British Embassy—there was yet a British Embassy in Paris—in safety.

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PART II.

METZ.

CHAPTER I.

The Siege.

INSTRUCTIONS caused me at this juncture to quit the advance upon Paris, and I left Meaux on the morning of the 17th September. It may not be altogether devoid of interest to recall the position of the German armies on that day so far as accorded with my knowledge. The troops had hourly been pouring to the front since first the 6th Army Corps crossed the pile-bridge at Trilport. The object, it was already known, was completely to invest the capital. The 5th Army Corps, with the head-quarters of the Crown Prince, striking south from Coulommiers, was pushing on through the villages to Chaulmes, and thence to Brie, on its road to cross the Seine at Villeneuve St. George; the pontoon train was in front between the field artillery and the infantry. The 5th might have marched faster, but that it had to tarry till the 2nd Bavarian Army Corps (still on the road from La Ferté) should have got up with it, taking the more circuitous route through the villages of Montceaux, Vanteuil, Boutigny, and so on to the great Melun road at Segy. The 5th and the Bavarians were then to push forward round in the direction of Versailles; the interval between their right and the Marne to be occupied by the 6th Army Corps. The destruction of the bridge over the Marne at Lagny had occasioned some temporary inconvenience, but this had already been remedied by the erection of a pontoon. The artillery of the 6th Army Corps

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had all gone to the south front. General Vinoy, with a field army, mostly consisting of regular troops, was reported by the Uhlans to be outside the cordon of forts on the south of Paris; and it seemed as if the 3rd Army might have to fight for its passage across the Seine. The Saxons were in force at Dammartin, touching our right, while the 4th Army Corps, the right wing of the Maas Army, was feeling round the north side of Paris. The King was expected to move forward in a few days, and occupy the château of Ferrières.

The bridges over the canals as I drove back to La Ferté on my return journey had already been repaired, but the Marne was still crossed by the pile bridge, although there was an alternative pontoon lower down the stream. Some little distance on the Meaux side of La Ferté I encountered the advance of the 2nd Bavarian Corps, and I had to strike off to the right on the road to Montmirail, till I came to a cross road, which brought me down again into the valley of the Seine upon Nogent, right into the rear of the Bavarians. There were no troops on this road, but it had been extensively traversed during the few preceding days, and the people were only just beginning to return to their homes. The villagers were very timid, and, I may add, very hungry, all along it, but it was wonderful how little damage the Germans had done during their transit. The poultry still strutted about the road through the village, and there was hardly a broken pane of glass to be seen. Furniture and valuables the people had secreted before the troops had come upon them, and the chief injury seemed to have been sustained by the straw stacks, upon which the men had drawn freely to make beds wherewithal in the empty houses. Over Nogent the wave had passed a little earlier, and the place had proportionately recovered more. Meat,

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both beef and mutton, was hanging in the open butcher's shop. All the way to Château Thierry was visible the eager desire of the peasantry and farmers to overtake temporarily arrested agricultural labour. Except for the occasional traces of a bivouac and now and then a broken down vine stem, there was no evidence that a vast army had so recently traversed this road. The children played around the doors beside the old crones at their knitting, the men and women were in the fields working with a clumsy assiduity, and it seemed to me not uncheerfully. The vinepickers were in the vineyards, filling their creels with the great clusters of somewhat over-ripe grapes; but their number was, no doubt, smaller than had peace reigned in the land. There were cattle in the pastures and horses at the plough and between the shafts of the carts. I do not think any one not aware of the fact could have gathered from outward appearance that anything of exceptional importance had recently occurred in the beautiful and smiling valley. In Château Thierry were a handful of Bavarian bullock drivers and a few footsore infantrymen. The people of this beautiful town had never forsook it in numbers so great as had the inhabitants of some other places; nor had they any reason to repent of their courage. Now it seemed as if they had fallen again into the somnolent routine of a provincial town. The burghers gossiped on the pavement, the young ladies promenaded in the avenues of noble trees, the lads squatted on the brink of the Marne, angling with a lazy pertinacity. The Hôtel de l'Eléphant was empty, changed indeed from that Elephant which I had seen a few days before, when von Tümpling's staff were buzzing the bottles in the *salle à manger*, and the cook was in a white heat at the multiplicity of orders. The landlord, a gentleman himself of the elephantine pattern, confided to

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me, with a sage wag of the head, that he would be heartily glad to see *Messieurs les Prussiens* come back to stop as long as they could make it convenient, for they were the best customers he had ever had, never grumbled, and invariably rejected red wine for champagne, for which they paid promptly the price demanded.

At Dormans were a considerable number of Germans, but no regular force—only sick and convalescents, and stragglers, chiefly belonging to the 63rd Regiment. Neither here did I find any misery. The disconsolateness of Madame at the hotel only proceeded from the circumstance that she had a son in MacMahon's Chasseurs de France, of whose fate at Sedan she knew nothing. The shops were all open, and the show in the windows was by no means despicable. Next morning, in and about Ville en Tardenoise, I met and passed the whole of the 11th Army Corps on its march to the front. The men looked fresh and well, and the horses in capital condition; but the ranks were considerably thinner than before that terrible struggle on to the plateau above Floing. Rheims was occupied by a division of Bavarians and another of Würtembergers. Although this town had been in a state of remarkable ferment on the occasion of the first entry of the Germans, it had got used to the situation in a very short time, and now it looked as if the German occupation was a thing from time immemorial. It was Sunday, and citizens and Bavarians were streaming out of the noble old cathedral and the various churches of the city in all the apparent friendliness of fellow-worshippers. Among the poorer classes in Rheims there had been considerable hardship, owing to the dearness of provisions and the obligation incumbent on them of providing food for the soldiers billeted on them. The German authorities had, however, averted further distress

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from this source, by establishing a commissariat for troops billeted on all those unable to support them.

Although the route between Rethel and Sedan had been traversed by a large portion of the German host on its south-western march after Sedan, the district, at least as far as Boulzicourt, seemed to have either suffered very little, or to have recuperated with surprising alacrity. As in the valley of the Marne, field operations were going on briskly. Agricultural horses seemed plentiful, and I saw several great herds of cattle in the flat water meadows. I felt a deep interest in the portion of road between Flize and Sedan. I had traversed it several times before —once on the day of the battle of Sedan, when a few scared old women, sitting crouching by their black hearths amidst the crashing of the cannonading, and an occasional scanty group of timid-eyed men peeping out from behind the stone dykes, were the only evidences of resident population in villages that bore the red-fresh impress of the fans of the war-dog.

The people were gradually coming back to Flize, Dom de Mesnil, and Fernois, the three villages between Boulzicourt and Sedan. In Flize it seemed that there must be plenty of wine, as well as plenty to drink it, for the auberge was crammed with the blue blouses. The females of the families had fallen into the old familiar way of sitting knitting in the sunshine outside their doors. But many houses were still closed up, and here and there the blackened skeleton of a roofless house, a grim memorial of the hot shell-fire. Over against Donchery the peasants were fishing the dead horses out of the Meuse, and burying them in great holes. It is impossible to describe the emotions which almost every step of this road called up in my mind—associated as it was with events fixed so indelibly in my memory. Here was

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the little house at which I had seen Napoleon alight from his carriage on the morning of the 2nd September. A child was playing on the spot where the Emperor and Bismarck sat in that earnest colloquy of theirs which I watched so intently. A woman was spreading clothes on the path in the potato plot, up and down which I had seen the ruined man moodily pacing as he tugged his dishevelled moustache, after Bismarck had drawn the white cap with the yellow band down over his eyes, and posted off to take counsel with his master. To the left was the ruined railway bridge over the Meuse. In my immediate front was the Château Bellevue, before which I had seen the perturbed meeting of the monarchs—Napoleon bowing low to hide the workings of his face; Wilhelm studying not to hide his emotion. Away across the low alluvial plain and the sweep of the river, that ghastly Schlachtfeld sloped upward from the low bluffs,—now brown and bare, but, when I saw it once before, a fearful space in which surged to and fro, in the gaps of the white smoke, the heaving masses of maddened combatants—when I saw it yet again a ghastly expanse of death, here chequered with dead grey horses and gay-clad dead riders, there flecked with the more sombre uniforms of the German soldiers lying thick where the mitrailleuse hail had beaten them to the earth. Below it was the island, with the château in its centre, on to which I had seen the ceaseless stream of French prisoners pouring on the 3rd—the once-gay gardens of the château now bare, and the trees stripped of their foliage. And farther to my right lay Sedan itself, with the German Landwehr sentry on its ramparts; and farther to the right, Bazeilles of ghastly memory.

The scene had changed since last I looked upon it. As I drove down the gentle slope into Sedan I met the

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townspeople, male and female, the Cook's tourists, and the relic-hunting riff-raff of Belgium, sauntering in dilettante fashion along the road, which three weeks ago had a ghastly fringe of corpses. The relic-hunters were picking up the knapsacks out of the ditch, and stealing the sword bayonets that had been set up in lieu of tombstones. In the open space between the enceinte and the minor fortifications stood the captured French artillery—five long straight rows of cannons, seventy-five in each row, besides numerous mitrailleuses and tumbrils. A single sentry did duty over the vast park. In the moats, German soldiers were punting, and from the bridges they were bobbing for weapons of war hidden by the water, occasionally bringing to the surface the bloated corpses of those who had erstwhile wielded these same weapons. All the shops in the town were open, and business seemed tolerably brisk. That the spirit of enterprise was not wholly dead was evinced by huge posters announcing "an immense consignment of cigars," and every *Débit de tabac* was doing a roaring trade. The convalescent wounded, with pallid faces and thin limbs, were placidly sunning themselves on the steps of the public buildings or tottering feebly about the streets. One young sous-officer interested me greatly. The reader may have seen the matrix of a branch covered by a round plaster of clay to prevent the canker from getting into the heart of the tree. This quiet, pale-faced lad had lost his left arm at the shoulder. It seemed to me that the shoulder itself had been taken out close to the collar-bone, and the bandages stood out just like the clay bole to which I have referred. He must have made a very quick recovery to be able to walk about not three weeks after a capital operation of this nature.

The siege of Metz, to watch which was my new duty,

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had virtually begun on that woeful day for the French arms when the ravine of Gravelotte was stormed, and Bazaine, baulked in his last desperate effort to keep hold of any of the main roads leading Parisward from Metz, was hurled back under the guns of Fort St. Quentin. On the day after Gravelotte, the soldiers of Prince Frederick Charles and Steinmetz had begun, in the prompt and thorough German manner, to girdle the environs of Metz with a series of defensive earthworks, linked together by a continuous cincture of entrenchment, so well contrived and so formidable as to reduce to a minimum the apparent discrepancy in strength between a vast army free to make its concentrations on any selected point, and a host more numerous, indeed, but necessarily attenuated as regarded any one point by reason of the immensity of the circle around the radius-border of which it had to show an unbroken front. That there was a time, during which Bazaine could have hewed his way through this girdle, if he had commenced his effort with discretion, and prosecuted it with daring energy and regardlessness of loss, it does not appear that in the nature of things there can be any reasonable doubt. What effect his emancipation would have produced, had it been effected soon after Gravelotte, is a question involving considerations so various that, in such a work as this, I may be excused referring to them in detail. But it is obvious that had Bazaine been a leader of originality, self-reliance, promptness, and boldness, instead of, as I estimate him, an honest, rather sluggish man, thankful to get his initiative from some one else, instead of ready to take his own initiative—a military formalist mainly, distracted between his political and his military obligations, and utterly unversed in the rare art of regalvanising beaten troops,—had Bazaine been an-

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other sort of man, he might surely have seriously complicated von Moltke's strategy.* Suppose that he had cut his way out in the obviously most eligible direction, somewhere between Plappeville and Maizières les Metz, and marched at the pace of the first Napoleon on the track of the Maas army. The Germans can march, but they cannot fly; the hot energy of the Red Prince could not have accomplished the impossibility of drawing in from the fringe of the wide circle an army strong enough to give Bazaine battle before he had won the start by several marches. It was the Maas army which met MacMahon in the teeth at Buzancy and Nouart as he came lumbering through the Argonne into the Maas valley; the third army had swung round, not in time to head him, but to take him on the right flank, extended in dishevelled march all along the valley. But if Bazaine had been close on the track of the Crown Prince of Saxony, the latter would have been in a vice. He could not have fought facing both ways. Had he elected to arrest MacMahon, Bazaine would have been upon him from behind; had he faced about and met Bazaine, the cannon of MacMahon would have been roaring on his new rear. His position, in fact, would have been untenable; and it seems plain that the only course open to him would have been to slip out of the *crux* to the southward, and thus to have allowed the coalescence of the army of Châlons and the army from Metz. The outcome of a junction so formidable it would be folly to attempt to define. The French situation would still have been precarious—perhaps nearly as bad as it was the day before Sedan. For on three sides three German armies would still have

* I give no heed to the balderdash written about Bazaine's abandonment to sensual indulgence, of which I have been unable to find a scintilla of unprejudiced and impartial confirmation.

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hemmed it in, and there was nothing behind it but the frontier. On the other hand, there would surely have been much possible to an army of 300,000 men, supposing the troops in good fighting heart, and the generals worth the skin of an orange.

But Bazaine lay supine behind his forts till he got his initiative in the shape of the plan to co-operate with MacMahon. It seems clear that the planners of that general's disastrous expedition contemplated that his march would be bloodless till he should have reached the north-western flank of the army environing Metz. Letters from Metz, intercepted by the besiegers, bore testimony to the fact that MacMahon was expected to make his appearance in that vicinity about the 30th of August. The signal for the Metz army was to have been three bombs fired in the air by MacMahon, and then a sortie was to be made at the same moment that the army of Châlons was to fall on the German rear. It is actually the case that Bazaine was cautioned against allowing the guns of the fortress to have too much elevation when fired in support of the sortie, to obviate the risk of the projectiles falling in the co-operating army on the further side of the Germans. But MacMahon had other fish to fry, and the three rockets never flashed into Metz the signal for co-operative action; so on the 31st, in blind bewilderment, Bazaine made his first great sortie, and made it in the direction in which success would have been most difficult to compass—in the direction of the north-east, the church spire of St. Barbe being seemingly his landmark. Apart from the actual difficulties to be encountered on unfavourable ground and against exceptionally strong opposing works, the selection of this direction for such a sortie seems simply inexplicable, unless Bazaine contemplated, not a junction with Mac-

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Mahon, but a bold push into the Rhine provinces—a conception no admirer has ever dreamt of attributing to him. MacMahon was expected from the north-west. Bazaine, had he cut through on the north-east, would have had to march to the junction round a third of the circumference of the compass, giving time for a German concentration in the path of his circuitous march. But he failed to break out: it may have been for want of persistency, a faculty in which he seems to have been weak; it may have been that he recognised what the Germans contend was recognisable, that the longer he tried the worse he would fail; and after this effort, while his chances of extrication diminished daily, his prospects, were he once outside, grew more and more precarious. He seems in a great measure to have accepted his fate, and solaced himself with the reflection that, at all events, he was keeping from other work the great armies which constituted his besiegers. That not a man of those might be judged superfluous, he made sorties from time to time during the month of September, not of a character suggesting an attempt to break out, but in force enough to convince the makers of his toils that the ropes by which the captive elephant was bound were not a whit too strong. No doubt, too, although I believe Bazaine to have been a perfectly honest and loyal Frenchman, he was hampered in his generalship by political considerations—of all trammels the most ruinous to daring action. The last of these partial sorties, most of which seem to have had supplies for their object, took place on the 28th of September, the day before I reached the front, and from the Germans engaged in it I gleaned some particulars respecting it.

The German foreposts occupied, in no great strength, the village of Colombey, where there are three large

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châteaux, in the upper stories of which there had been left by the inhabitants a considerable store of grain. They had taken refuge in Metz, and probably acquainted the French of the existence of these stores. Anyhow, in the afternoon of the 28th the French, in large numbers, and covered by the artillery of Fort St. Julien, made a dash at Colombey, their advance followed by a number of empty waggons. For once they surprised the comparatively weak German foreposts, and drove them out of Colombey. Covering their operations by throwing forward tirailleurs into the woods to the front and towards La Planchette, they filled the waggons with the grain and started them on the return journey. But, meanwhile, the Prussian artillery had come to the front, and the shells fell thick among the Frenchmen in Colombey and the convoy on the road. The former scuttled back in great haste under the guns of St. Julien; the waggons went on at a gallop, but out of thirty-six only fourteen succeeded in getting safe off. The rest were arrested *in transitu* by the influence which the Prussian shells exercised on the animals which drew the waggons—an influence which manifested itself in limbs blown in a variety of directions. There was no great loss in killed or wounded on either side. A captain of the 44th Regiment was killed under circumstances which were a disgrace to civilized warfare. When his detachment was in retreat he fell wounded severely, but not mortally. His men placed him in shelter, and then left him as they fell back. When they recovered the village, they found the corpse of their captain mangled barbarously—his fingers cut off for the sake of the rings he wore, and his throat cut from ear to ear. I found the Germans justly incensed at this atrocity.

The cargo which the train carried that left Saarbrück

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on the morning of the 29th of September, was of a sufficiently diversified character. There were country-women, with great tubs of butter, which they were taking up to the front to find a good market; officers and soldiers, new men and convalescents, both from sickness and wounds, on their way to join and re-join their regiments; Saarbrück merchants going up for orders; a few Englishmen, who nourished the idea that the fighting was chronically in progress just outside the station at Courcelles, and that, by walking a pace or two, they would be able to command a bird's-eye view of the whole affair; marketenders, who had been making investments; and a few Frenchmen on their way to the intermediate towns, who were doing their best to seem as German as possible. Our way to Forbach lay through a corner of the ground on which was fought the battle of Spicheren, and, as the train passed through the woods near Schönecken, I saw not a few graves of the men who had fallen in the fierce fight of the 6th of August. Near St. Avold we passed the débris of the train which had been shattered in a collision that brought death to several French prisoners, and at this town also we found a large depôt of military stores and provender. There was a still larger depôt at Falquemont, where also were collected a quantity of artillery waggons captured from the French at Gravelotte. The station at Courcelles was a sight. It was a centre from which radiated in every direction long lines of waggons of every description, carrying stores of all kinds to the different army posts, north, south, east, and west. All around the deserted little village itself are great herds of cattle, piles of stores, whole pyramids of medical comforts, and long lines of sick and relay horses. The bustle was immense, and yet everything seemed orderly. There was of course an Etappen Commando in the station, but

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the worthy lieutenant who represented the said Etappen Commando knew nothing whatever about anything. All he could or would tell me was that Prince Frederick Charles' head-quarters were at Corny, on the Moselle, to the south of Metz, but he did not know the distance. He had no waggons, no horses, very little temper, and less time to gossip. The circumstances were sufficiently unpromising. One might as well look for quartern loaves in the kennel of Fleet-street as for quarters in or around Courcelles; and the field-post, the only and that a precarious means of getting to Corny, did not leave till three in the morning. I took the resolution of pursuing the policy out of which I often found luck eventuate, of going straight to the front till the foreposts would let me go no further. Striking northward then, and inclining westward from Courcelles, I passed in succession through the villages of Laquenexy, Marsilly, Ogy, and St. Agnan. All these I found occupied by troops, constituting the second investing line environing the fortress and town of Metz.

All the district was dotted over with the graves of the battle fought by Steinmetz on the 14th of August, and of men who had fallen in the various forepost fights. From Courcelles the scene was one of utter barrenness and desolation, wastes traversed everywhere by tracks of waggons, chequered by abandoned bivouacs, the leafy bowers of which, plastered with mud, stood forlorn and unused, all the troops having been got under cover except the foreposts who necessarily had to remain in the open. Very few of the inhabitants still remained in the district, and of these the plight was very miserable. Agricultural occupations were at a standstill; the vineyards, traversed by waggon roads and cut in two by entrenchments, were utterly ruined. The houses were wrecks,

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many of them wholly or partially burned by fires kindled by the shells. In Courcelles, the only living thing not German was a mongrel dog which stuck to his kennel when his owner ran away. The Germans had christened him "Courcelles," and the time-serving rogue was already more than half German—traitor that he was. In the forepost village of Montoy, which I visited the same evening, I found a considerable number of inhabitants. One old woman sat placidly before the door knitting stockings, while the troops lined the entrenchment just in her front. I suppose she had got so used to shells and bullets that she did not mind them, or it might be that her despair had culminated in a sort of apathy of equanimity. The poor country folks and villagers around Metz were in cases so miserable that it seemed they must inevitably starve the moment that the Germans should withdraw. Though they had horses, and though the bullets had not been sweeping their farms, yet last autumn they durst not put a spade or a plough into the ground. Every field holds the "sacred and precious seed" that will germinate never till the last trumpet sounds. It is right comforting to know that good friends—Friends in more than the mere name—came to the aid of these poor wretches, with a promptness, tenderness, and efficiency characteristic of a sect that ever prefer acting to speaking. But this is anticipating. From St. Agnan I proceeded two kilometres, still in a north-westerly direction, till I reached the village of Flanville, where lay the 4th Regiment of East Prussian Infantry, forming part of the 2nd division of the 1st Army Corps. The regimental staff was comfortably located in a pleasant château, and liking the looks of the place and the friendly ways of the officers, I asked permission to attach myself for the time to the regiment, a civility which was frankly and unhesitatingly

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granted. I was informally taken on the strength, the good old Oberst made me free of his modest table, the officers of No. 6 company, right hearty fellows all, assigned me six feet by four of straw in the corner of the drawing-room, in which there was not a scrap of furniture but a grand piano, on which a sequence of voluntaries, sometimes accompanied by singing, sometimes by dancing, seemed constantly going on, and everybody was anxious to show attention to the Engländer who had strayed on to the foreposts. In the afternoon Lieutenant Werth, the officer in command of the 6th company (vice the Hauptmann shot on the 31st of August), accompanied me on a ride round a considerable radius of the eastern forepost circuit, and the lucidity of his explanations enabled me to arrive at what I afterwards found was a correct idea of the position, as it was in the end of September.

Next the Moselle, and eastward therefrom, the 8th Army Corps kept watch and ward, its left on Ars-sur-Moselle, its right interlacing, at the village of Magny, with the 7th Army Corps. From Magny the 7th held the line of environment lying in the village of Peltre, the château and house of Mercy-la-Haut, shattered and burnt, and on as far as Ars Laquenexy. It had foreposts and *Feldwachen* a little further forward, but not so far as they had been a few days previously, when the foreposts were at La Grange aux Bois. The left of the 1st Army Corps lay in Colombey, which was also considerably burnt, feeling the right of the 7th in Mercy-la-Haut. Its second line extended to the northward in the villages of Ogy, Flanville, Retonfay, Château Gras, and Ste. Barbe. The first line lay in Coincy, Montoy, Noisseville, Servigny, and Failly. The whole of this latter line was within range of the big guns of the great Metz outwork of St.

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Julien, which occupies the summit of a mamelon. Between the first and second line there was an interval of only about a mile. To the front there lay, first, the foreposts, then the *Feldwachen*, and lastly the single sentries, within 1,500 yards of St. Julien. The first line occupied a section of the continuous entrenchment which ran right round Metz. All the villages were roughly fortified by barricades, *chevaux-de-frise*, &c.; holes had been broken through all the houses for firing, and, indeed, every village formed a very respectable, if rough and ready fortress. The foreposts lay either in single houses, also well fortified by entrenchments and barricades, or in the field behind earthworks of no inconsiderable magnitude. The *Feldwachen* chiefly occupied woods or the gardens of châteaux. A *Feldwache* which may be taken as typical, I noticed in the village of Lauvallière on the route to Saarlouis, two kilometres nearer Metz than Montoy. Here lay two companies, arms piled close at hand, and ready for a sortie from the enemy at a moment's warning. To the left, in the hamlet of la Plancette, was another *Feldwache* in a deep ravine. Here I had to dismount and walk up the slope beyond to the knoll on which the solitary sentry kept his watch within point-blank range of a chassepot bullet from the French works at the hamlet of Belle Croix. We could see with the naked eye the Frenchmen moving about the forts of les Bottes and St. Julien, and circulating about the environs both of them and of the town, while the great eminence of Mont St. Quentin, with its mass of fortifications on the summit, shut in the scene, dominating the whole valley from the further side of the Moselle. All the front was pitted over with the craters of shells. The men of one of the regiments were erecting quite a permanent barrack of wood, the sides covered with earth, behind an isolated brewery

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a little way in the rear of Lauvallière. Further north, Noisseville was densely filled with German troops; Nouilly, which lies between it and St. Julien, was neutral ground, occupied by neither army, while the French were in force in Mey and Vantoux, villages still nearer the fortress. We went forward to the edge of a wood near Mey, accompanied by two Prussian patrols, and got a warning to go back in the shape of a sharp fusilade from out a garden in the environs of Mey. To complete the narrative of the localities, the environment was taken up on the right of the 1st Army Corps by the Landwehr Division, consisting of three brigades, each six battalions strong, under the command of General von Kummer. They covered at that time the ground round nearly to the Moselle on the north, but were afterwards moved to the other side of the stream, changing places with the 10th Army Corps. The General commanding the 1st Army Corps, his Excellency von Manteuffel, lay in Ste. Barbe, a little to our north rear. Our immediate commander was General von Pritzelwitz, the chief of the Second Division of the First Army Corps, who had his quarters two kilometres behind us, in the little village of Puche, where likewise was the Feldpost.

Even so early as the time of which I am writing, deserters and the German prisoners whom Bazaine had sent back, concurred in representing the condition of the troops inside and around Metz as being very bad in the matter of food. They were represented as living chiefly on horseflesh, and as having neither flour, rice, nor salt —the latter want being the subject of much complaint. The discipline of the troops was said to be good, and the morale of a character very different to that of the disorganised horde who threw down their arms at Sedan. But the German returned prisoners united in abusing the

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domineering greed of the French officers, who cared nothing comparatively for their men, provided their own wants were satisfied. This selfishness seems forcibly to have struck the honest Germans, used as they are to treatment so different.

It could not fail to strike even the most cursory observer that the alertness and completeness of the German forepost system was a great feature of the army, and one of the leading causes of its success. At night the *Feldwache* always went forward to the post occupied during the day by the farthest outlying sentry. Here it broke right and left into small picquets, leaving a strong nucleus in the centre. The front, at a distance of 200 or 300 yards, was continually traversed by cavalry patrols, who often rode right in among the sleeping Frenchmen, whose system of night vigilance was not brilliant. Then there would be a pistol shot and a round of wild chassepot firing in the dark, and the daring Uhlan would dash out through the red legs, back to his supports. Writing of chassepots, it may be noted that the German forepost troops were by this time extensively armed with these weapons to enable them to cope on equal terms with the French tirailleurs. Of the 2nd Battalion of the 4th Regiment seventy-five men were so armed, or rather seventy-five chassepots were in use and were transferred from *Feldwache* to *Feldwache*, as the changes of guard were made. This seemed to settle the question as to the relative merits of the Chassepot and the Zündnadelgewehr in the eyes of the Germans.

On the evening of September 29th it was officially made known to the troops that the French were constructing three bridges across the Moselle to the westward of Fort St. Julien, it was believed with a view to a sortie in the direction of Maison Rouge and Woippy.

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About four o'clock next morning the sky became brilliantly illuminated with the shells under the fire of which they attempted to carry out their design, and with the return fire with which the German artillery met it. In the thick darkness the effect as seen from our position (about four miles away) was magnificent. Between the louder crashes of the cannon was heard the sharper rattle of the musketry fire, singly and in volleys. The firing became fainter towards six o'clock, and by seven had died away altogether—the presumption being that the French attempt had been baulked, and this we afterwards learned was the case. A few days previously the garrison of Thionville had surprised and captured a German provision train, which was carried into that fortress. The food being more needed in Metz than in Thionville, it was anticipated that an effort would be made to fight the train through the German environment into the beleaguered fortress. In all probability the affair of this morning was a diversion intended to facilitate this movement. The Germans, however, were fully alive to the contingency, and they succeeded in foiling the attempt.

I found that the Germans were in possession of detailed drawings and full particulars of the French troops lying around Metz, the correctness of which I was afterwards able to verify. Bazaine's forces—that is to say, the army driven back on Metz after the battle of Gravelotte—were not permitted to enter the town of Metz. The whole army was encamped on the slopes of the outlying fortifications either of the town or of the outlying strongholds, in the intervening country, and in the various villages which still remained in the possession of the French. The forts were garrisoned by Mobiles and National Guards. Bazaine's head-quarters were at Ban St. Martin, outside the town, and around him lay the

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camp of the Imperial Guards. Opposite us on the east side lay the 3rd Army Corps of the French army—Lebœuf's corps. Its forepost nearest us was in the wood in front of Mey, and the chain extended southward to the front of the hamlet Belle Croix. The mass of the corps lay to the rear. Within the previous few days a considerable camp had been established on the slope of St. Julien, looking towards us. We could see the white tents, and the red-legged gentlemen strolling about them. Their patrols, mounted and on foot, were wont to cross our front so near that the countenances of the men could be made out with the glass. The German *Feldwachen* could have picked them off quite easily if they had chosen; but there was an order against firing at small detached parties. The French did not show the same civility. A single man could not show himself on the advance line without being blazed at by a regular volley, which seldom, however, took any effect, the firing being so wild. The guard changing was wont to be a great time for a waste of French powder and shot all along the line, and the field guns at Little Belle Croix made a point of spitefully throwing a few shells on the brewery on the great chaussée constituting the chief forepost on our right front.

When the French made a sortie, Lieutenant Werth informed me, their scheme of advance was very characteristic. They scuttled out from the shelter of the fortresses in the loosest skirmishing order and with great rapidity till they had reached intermediate spaces sheltered from the German fire, whether by woods or by the configuration of the ground. In those they accumulated their masses, and came forward in dense columns. But they had never, save on the great sortie of the 31st of August, and at Colombey on the 28th September, suc-

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ceeded in getting to close quarters with the first line of the Germans. The artillery of the latter came into play with its deadly practice, and then there was no alternative but a rapid retreat. Their demonstrations were always accompanied by a cannonade from Belle Croix and St. Julien, but seldom by the discharge of field artillery. This latter circumstance had led the Germans to the conclusion that the French were short of ammunition for their field guns, and this seemed probable, looking to the lavish use they made of them at Gravelotte. There must have been artillery of great calibre in the forts, for Lieutenant Werth pointed out to me, by Lauvallière, lying in the ditch, a huge shell, which could not have been less than a 72-pounder. It was unexploded, a fact noticeable of a large proportion of the French shells.

The losses that had been suffered by some of the regiments of the 1st Army Corps since it had come within hail of Metz were stupendous. On the 14th August, and in the minor fights of the 30th and 31st of the same month, and those during the course of September, the 4th Regiment lost (killed and wounded) 35 officers out of a total of 60, and 1,000 men out of 3,000. The 45th Regiment, lying in its vicinity, had lost yet more of its officers. Out of 60 no fewer than 42 had fallen. The result had been that a large number of Vicefeldwebels and several sergeants had received commissions. As these were comparatively inexperienced in their new duties, they were daily receiving assiduous instructions from their seniors. These informal lectures were highly interesting—not a few officers of the British service would have greatly benefited by attending them. The troops also were drilled daily, notwithstanding their position in front of the enemy. On the morning of the 30th I

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watched a whole battalion at skirmishing drill, and a right pretty sight it was. The recruits that had come forward since the beginning of the war spent hours daily in perfecting their drill, and the efficiency of the whole army was sedulously maintained at the highest pitch.

I was present the same morning at the very interesting ceremony of the distribution to the 4th Regiment of the iron crosses awarded to members of it for valour in the field. The ceremony took place at Puche, the headquarters of the general of division, who personally distributed the crosses in the presence of the officers of the regiment. The band played the old regimental air, the "Hohenfriedberg," and the colours were on the ground. The gallant 4th had earned no fewer than twenty crosses already, and the award seemed to have been made with the most rigid impartiality, the men taking their full share of the coveted distinction with their officers. The 4th is one of the old regiments of the Prussian service, and its annals record a long and gallant career. Its regimental march, the name of which I have just mentioned, is secured to it by a special royal order in remembrance of the valour which it displayed at the battle of Hohenfriedberg, fought in 1745.

To understand the means of defence which the French army enclosed in Metz had to keep wherewithal the Germans at bay, a detailed description of the remarkable fortifications with which the virginity of La Pucelle was guarded may not be out of place. Although Metz is no longer French, these works still exist in their entirety, to say nothing of their having been strengthened, and therefore respecting them the present tense may be used.

The town of Metz, with the great Cathedral, lies for the most part on the east side of a branch of the Moselle, which forks off from the main stream near La Grange aux

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Dames, and forms the islands of Chambière, and lower down of Sauley and St. Simphorien. A large suburb, however, stands on the first of these islands. The inner fortifications surround the town continuously, with the exception of one gap to the southward, which is covered efficiently by the branch of the Moselle which divides the islands of Sauley and St. Simphorien. On the north of the Ile de Chambière are two important forts on the inner line, one at the north-western angle of the enceinte, the other detached in the plain of the island, but connected with the enceinte by a covered way. On the south of the inner line are the Redoubt du Pate to the east, and the Lunette d'Arcon to the west, both connected with the enceinte by a covered way. The western side of the inner line is covered by the great Fort Moselle on the farther side of the main stream of the Moselle, a double crown work of immense strength and magnitude, inclosing great magazines and arsenals. To the south of it the bastion of Ile de Sauley sends out a long spur of fortifications, which crosses the Moselle, and terminates in a redoubt on the farther side. Nor is the eastern side of the inner line less strongly protected. In front of the enceinte looms the great double crown work of Belle Croix, to the full as large as Fort Moselle, and more highly favoured by its natural position. To the south of it stands Fort Gisors, a minor detached fortification which serves to complete the circuit of connection with the Redoubt du Pate on the south. Thus the town of Metz is, in fact, environed by two lines of fortifications, the continuous enceinte with its bastions and what I may term the outer cordon of the inner circle having intimate connection with the enceinte.

Of themselves these defences would make the place all but impregnable, but they are by no means the most

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important defences of this extraordinary fortress. There is an outer circle of detached fortifications, each of which is the complement of the other, and of which no one can be assailed without the assailant laying his account to be enfiladed by at least two of the others. Let me begin with these at the Moselle, on the north of the town at La Grange aux Dames, and work round, proceeding first in an easterly direction. After climbing the bank of the stream we come to the chaussée leading to Bouzonville, and crossing it we almost immediately come on the great glacis of Fort St. Julien. This is an outlying fort of the first magnitude, covering the whole of the round summit of a natural eminence, and having on three sides a natural glacis, therefore of great extent. It lies about two English miles from Metz, in a north-easterly direction; and a little to the north-east of it is the Monastery and wood of Grimont, the former of which Bazaine's engineers had scientifically diverted from ecclesiastical to military purposes. About a mile and a half due south of St. Julien, and about a mile due east from Fort Belle Croix, is Fort les Bottes, a great hog-backed structure chiefly of earth, which was thrown up as a precautionary measure, either immediately before or immediately after the outbreak of the war. The Germans, I believe, are engaged in altering it from a "provisional" to a temporary fort. Its position is very important as a link between St. Julien and Fort Queleu on the south. It stands a little to the south of the great chaussée from Metz to Saarlouis and Saarbrück, while as yet the bisection has not taken place. Forward about a mile from les Bottes, and on the chaussée just before it bisects, is a hamlet named Belle-Croix, which must not, however, be confounded with the fort of the same name. Here, also, the French had strong earthworks mounted

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with guns, but these, for the most part at least, were field artillery, and paucity of ammunition kept them tolerably quiet. About a mile and a half south of Fort les Bottes, and about the same distance from Metz, is Fort Queleu, also an important structure, dominating the main road to Strasburg and the adjoining flat country as far as the telegraph on the elevated ground before Mercy-le-Haut. Turning now westward, and inclining to the south, we come to Fort St. Privat, at a distance of about two and a half miles both from Fort Queleu and Metz. Its value consists in the command it has of the eastern side of the valley of the Moselle, of the road from Nancy, and of the railway lines which converge behind it. Leaving it, we come to the Moselle again, this time on the south-west side of the town, and striking up nearly due north, we have nothing in the shape of permanent fortifications, although during the siege there were several temporary batteries, till we climb the great hump, on the top of which stands Fort St. Quentin, the greatest outwork of Metz. St. Quentin is a complete fortress in itself; it could hold out were all its neighbours taken, and it may safely be termed impregnable, looking at the combined strength of its natural position and its skilfully devised fortifications. Not only does it dominate the country to the south, south-west, west, and north-west, but it frowns outward to the east, and its great guns would play an important part in the defence against an attack on the inner fortifications of Metz. North-west of it, about a mile on the top of the bluffs, lies Fort Plappeville, or les Carrières, the natural position of which is not so strong as that of St. Quentin, because the elevation on which it stands is not isolated, while it is open in the rear, and therefore requires St. Quentin as the complement of its defence, a defect the Germans are remedying.

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It acts as a defence over a great tract of country to the west, and keeps a besieging force at a respectful distance, so that it cannot reach the edge of the bluffs and pitch projectiles down into Metz. Due north from Metz, about two miles, and standing in the middle of the plain, bounded by the Thionville Railway on the west, and the Moselle on the east, lies the improvised work of St. Eloy, the last and not the least important of the outworks of Metz. Its province is in combination with St. Julien to take care of the valley of the Moselle to the northward, and to dominate the great road to Thionville. All these fortifications (except the little Belle-Croix) were furnished with heavy guns of position, and the French had no lack of ammunition for the use of those great fortress guns, although field artillery ammunition might have been short. Besides their field artillery, the Germans had two or three batteries of siege 12-pounders on the western side of the Moselle, and I am not aware that during the siege they had either any more numerous or more formidable siege artillery on the ground. Their quiescently defensive, or rather obstructive, position, then, was dictated by sound military conditions, since a blockade answered exactly the purpose they had in view, viz., to reduce the place by famine.

None of the villages around Metz are very large, and Flanville is one of the smallest of them—consisting of a few hovels huddled by the side of a country road, under the lee of two large châteaux. Small as it was, it had to accommodate the whole of a battalion of the 4th. The men were packed closely in the houses, occupying lofts, passages, sheds, and every other available shred of cover. The officers occupied the two châteaux, both of which had been beautiful residences before war had laid them waste. The colonel's château still had its garden un-

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destroyed—in this autumn time a paradise of sweet-scented flowers, with here a fountain, and there a leafy bower. Our château had sustained harder fortune. A company of men, as well as a number of officers occupied its spacious chambers; on the lawn outside were stacked the needle-guns, ready for immediate use, and the flower-beds had been trodden down almost beyond the power of recognition. A Corporalschaft occupied the conservatory, and the flower-garden was a drill ground. The château had been pelted by the French in the battle of the 1st of September—it was still inside the range of their guns—and the roof had been shattered by shells. We occupied the drawing-room, in which were two great mirrors reaching to the roof. The one over the mantelpiece had been penetrated by a bullet exactly in the centre, and fantastically starred in all directions. Here is a sketch written on the spot, of the manner of our daily life, when the gentlemen over the way did not happen to be bellicose.

"In the grey morning, unless we have been previously roused by firing on the front, the soldier servants come into our drawing-room bedroom, bringing the morning coffee. Long before, the soldiers on the other side of the partition have been stirring, and they are the merriest, the most noisy set of Kerle imaginable. After coffee, drill begins. The young soldiers are at the goose-step in the flower-garden; the older hands practising skirmishing by companies in the neighbouring vineyards. At nine comes appel—a kind of parade without arms, at which the clothes and accoutrements of the men are carefully inspected. The appel only takes place occasionally, but the under officers have a minor appel every day, at each of which in turn there is an inspection of a separate article. Now it is arms, now boots, now cloaks—the

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under officer is responsible for the condition of his Schaft or squad, and he takes care he shall not incur a reprimand through any want of vigilance. After appel the officers breakfast. The feeding is homely, and eaten in a homely fashion—clean plates, or plates of any kind, not being plentiful, and the glass-ware decidedly deficient. But there never wants a hearty appetite; and for a guest like myself, a hearty welcome and a frank kindliness that I never can forget. Breakfast over, comes an interval of visiting, gossiping, and beer drinking, for we have our own marketender on the lawn, and Saarbrück is only forty miles away. Some write, some read, others sleep; it is astonishing how much sleep it takes to tire some people. The men employ themselves in tailoring, in seeing to the rations, in conducting the cooking of the dinner, and in smoking in the bright sunshine. Dinner is rather a discursive meal; you imagine you have finished it when you have eaten of the rice, the soup, and the mincemeat in your own particular room, but going the round you find another mess devoting their attention to plums and schinken, and you join in of course. Then you go a little farther, and find the inmates of another room topping off with chocolate or coffee and a *petit verre*. Of course you are asked to partake, and equally of course you do so. After dinner is the siesta. The quarters are then as quiet as in the dead of night. In an hour or two a sprightly officer awakens, and assiduously devotes himself to the stirring up of his more drowsy brother officers. A pack of cards comes to the surface somehow, and presently the round table is surrounded by a circle of card-players, the game proceeding with a considerable amount of noise, owing to a habit most Germans have of all speaking at once, each at the top of his voice. Those who are not at the card-table stroll out to visit the brother

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officer who is on the *repli*, drop in upon the worthy major and colonel, whom they find placidly smoking in their beautiful garden, or watch Fort St. Julien and the French tents through their glasses. Deep as the interest may be in the game which is being played at the card-table, that and all other local interest fades into nothing at the appearance of the Underofficer who has been over to head-quarters to the Feldpost. It is good to watch the countenances as the letters, hurriedly opened, are being pored over with eager faces. The eyes of the portly Dantzic premier-lieutenant on the sofa become strangely moist as the crumpled fuchsia and rosebud drop out of his letter, the fragrance still clinging about them as when they had been placed there as a love token from the children he has left at home. What is that which the handsome young lieutenant hurriedly clutches as it falls out of the envelope, and pushes inside his tunic on the side next his heart? I don't think it is a bill from his tailor. He would not smile so if it were a dunning letter he was reading, and the most gushing man is not addicted to the practice of stealthily kissing a letter from his tailor ere he consigns it to his breast-pocket. Depend upon it the lieutenant is happy in the knowledge that the girl of his heart, far away on the shores of the Baltic, has not forgotten him. The domestic side of the German character comes out very strong in this interval of letter-reading. Nearly all the officers of the 4th are from the same district, and the letter of one officer commonly contains messages to others who at home are friends and neighbours. I was amused to-day by the amazed delight of a grizzled officer who must have seen close on fifty years, when he looked at the superscription of one of his letters. '*Gott im Himmel!* it's from the old mother,' he cried. Then came quite a

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gush of interest as to the age of the old lady, and when he told us with some pride that she was close on ninety, the 'Donnerwetters' were many and hearty. After the letters come the perusal of the newspapers and gossiping as to their contents, and the probable designs of Bismarck —it is always Bismarck who is named. When darkness falls we have music and dancing. One of our volunteers is a brilliant instrumentalist, and he comes down from his lofty abode near the roof, and plays our piano in the drawing-room. Now it is 'Die Wacht am Rhein,' the officers chiming in with the words, and the men on the farther side of the partition and out in the environs taking up the strain, till the volume of sound must sweep over the glades and the ruined vineyards to the French field watches outside Belle-Croix and St. Julien. Now it is a waltz which the young volunteer plays, and then the spectacle would greatly delight Mr. Spurgeon, who is an advocate for male dancing with male. A nimble young officer, who, if he were not a gallant fellow with medals on his breast, would have made a capital dancing-master, treats us to a burlesque rendering of the cancan, and the music gets into the head of a rotund officer of middle-age, who executes the most fantastic capers with a suppleness, and at the same time a gravity, that sets everybody in a roar. He infects the rest, and for the time one might imagine he was in the company of a congregation of dancing dervishes. But we must not keep the men awake, and, in truth, nobody cares to be a late sitter himself. By ten o'clock we are all in bed, the whole place wrapped in slumber, save the sentries who surround us with a cordon through which a mouse could not creep. No more could a mouse creep into or out of Metz. The sentries' orders are precise to allow nobody to pass through after nightfall on any pretext whatever. Last night an

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officer and myself, who had been out on the foreposts, allowed darkness to overtake us before our return. As we approached the chain of sentries, the stern 'halt' came to us through the darkness. 'Officer,' was the reply, but it availed nothing—notwithstanding that the sentry belonged to the officer's own regiment. We had to stand till a party came to conduct us to the guard, and then the officer went back and praised the sentry for the creditable manner in which he had done his duty."

After dark on the night of the 1st October the 4th Regiment marched forward into the first line, occupying the village of Noisseville, a position sufficiently far advanced to make its occupation very ticklish work. The village was within easy range of the shell fire, either from St. Julien or Fort les Bottes, while the field guns at the little Belle-Croix were, so to speak, just over the way. The village constituted part and parcel of the line of the German entrenchments; every cottage was a stronghold; in every street, alley, and gap was an earthwork. About 300 yards to our right front, in the bottom of a rather abrupt valley was the village of Nouilly, belonging to neither side. Just outside of it, on the French side, and to the north-west, begins the Bois de Mey, on the southern edge of which lies the village of the same name, occupied by the French. The wood swarmed with their tirailleurs; we could see their red breeches through the trees, and they also acquainted us with their presence by firing occasionally at our patrols when they imagined they came too near the wood.

At night I went on the farthest *Feldwache* on our front, just behind the village of Nouilly, and remained there during the night with the lieutenant in command. As soon as he relieved his predecessors, he threw forward a sergeant's party into Nouilly, with orders to hold it till

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daylight. About one o'clock in the morning our cavalry patrols, supported by an infantry detachment, felt their way to the edge of the Bois de Mey, and there encountered a fierce but wild discharge of musketry. They fell back on the sergeant's party at Nouilly, who held the place till they could discern the advance of large detachments of French troops. The shots had stirred up the three battalions lying in and around Mey, and they had come out on the rampage to annihilate the patrols and whatever else should come in their way. The German sergeant in Nouilly, however, quietly fell back on his supporting *Feldwache*, where the lieutenant stood fast till he could see the Frenchmen swarming into Nouilly, and then we fell back on the *repli*, which in turn supported the *Feldwache*. It did one good to see the coolness of the officer, a young lieutenant, not to all appearance over twenty-five, but who wore the '66 medal. I asked him why, looking at the seeming strength of the approaching force, he did not give a general alarm. The apparatus for this purpose was complete. A fusee thrown into the bonfire on the edge of the *repli* post would have got 40,000 men under arms in ten minutes, and the artillery galloping to the front in a quarter of an hour. But it was exactly the responsibility of such a general disturbance that prevented him from crying "Wolf"—although, to my judgment, there seemed cause enough. The event proved how wisely Lieutenant von Verzin had learned to calculate contingencies. The French were content temporarily to occupy Nouilly, and after a brief stay fell back on their original position at Mey. But if he refrained from giving the alarm, he did not allow a single precaution to escape him. His company was extended in skirmishing order on both sides of the post, ready to retard the French advance should it have taken

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place. As it was, a great number of shots were exchanged, but no harm was done on either side.

Around the church of Noisseville there was a *repli* post, continually occupied by a company. The church itself, by the way, is, or rather I fear I must say was, a very interesting structure. Of great age and considerable architectural pretensions, it had been pounded with shells more severely than any building I have ever seen. The French had pelted it on one side, the Germans on the other. The steeple had been originally square, now it was roughly round; there were great gaps in the walls and holes in the roof, and the birds were singing merrily in the half ruined structure. The *curé* had remained by his church, and, strange to say, his residence had escaped with very little damage. The colonel of the 4th was his guest, or rather he was the colonel's guest, for he had nothing to eat but what was purveyed by our worthy *Oberst*. The good *curé* spoke German fluently, and got a kindly salute from everybody; he took the firing very coolly, and seemed in remarkably good spirits, all things considered. But to return to the *repli* round the shattered church. The 6th Company found it on the 2nd, and I found my way into Lieutenant Werth's shanty after coming back from the *Feldwache* in the grey dawn. Till about one o'clock all was quiet—the men lay about on the straw, smoking or sleeping, and the cavalry videttes, 100 yards to our front, circled leisurely. Suddenly there came a spattering chassepot fire from the riflemen on the little Belle Croix directed against an infantry party which was beating the foreground. The bullets came whistling over the *repli* post as Lieutenant Werth and myself jumped up to see what was the matter. One hit the ground a little to our front, ricochetted between us, and lodged in the arm of a soldier who was lying

down a little in our rear. The order was for all to get under cover immediately, but Werth had some difficulty in getting obeyed, so eager were his fellows to see what was going on. He himself stood coolly exposed as the bullets came whistling by, minding them no more than if they had been so many buzzing flies. Firing with the French is infectious, and it was taken up all along the line as far as Mey, for what reason it was impossible to say. The Germans did not think it worth while to reply, and the videttes phlegmatically continued their circling. In about an hour the French fire died away, having occasioned no casualty, save the wound to the man in our *repli.*

On the night of the 2nd of October a detachment of the 4th did a little job in the way of fire-raising. The neutral village of Nouilly, immediately to the front of Noisseville, has already been mentioned; it contained —or, at least, was believed to contain—considerable stores of provisions, which, however, were so secreted in the cellars and elsewhere, that the Prussians could not discover them. The inhabitants, however, had for the most part taken refuge in Metz, and it was natural that they should inform their military countrymen of the whereabouts of the provisions. It was equally natural that men on short commons should do their best to obtain all the food they could, from whatever source; and it is believed that when the French patrols had temporarily occupied Nouilly the night before, they succeeded in carrying away with them some stores. The place lay so directly under the fire of Forts St. Julien and les Bottes that it was not tenable permanently by the Germans, and, therefore, there was no resource but to burn it.

A little after eight o'clock in the evening I was sitting

at supper with Lieutenants von Hosius and Fischer, of the 5th Company of the 2nd Battalion of the 4th regiment. The quarters these good gentlemen occupied would hardly have been considered eligible by a London working-man looking for lodgings. The house had been burnt out twice, and the bare walls were now roofed in with a few planks loosely covered with straw. Door and window were both gone, but their place was not inefficiently supplied with blankets. There happened to be left a tolerably decent table, and one side of the apartment was littered with straw for a bed. We ate rather promiscuously on the foreposts round Metz. If anyone had anything exceptionally good for supper it was sure to ooze out, and then the fortunate man had an exceptional number of callers who "dropped in promiscuous" just as the dainty dish was upon the table. The dainty dish on this occasion consisted of salt herrings boiled with onions, and washed down with beer warmed with meal, lard, and schnaps. Lieutenant Fischer understood no English, but had a faculty for expressing his meaning pantomimically in a manner which I never saw equalled. As a linguist Mr. von Hosius had a great superiority over his comrade. He knew some English. It is true his knowledge was not of a varied character. So far as ever I learned it was confined to "Good-night," with which he was wont to take delight in saluting me about five in the morning, and a verse of "Lucy Long," with which he invariably essayed to follow up the conversation. Between the salt herrings, my German, Mr. Fischer's pantomime, and Mr. von Hosius's "Lucy Long," we were getting on as well as could be expected, when a Feldwebel entered with an order for Lieutenant von Hosius, which the latter read aloud:—

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"Lieutenant von Hosius will parade at nine o'clock with 15 volunteers of his company, and will proceed forward to burn the village of Nouilly."

Von Hosius was fond of salt herrings, and fond, too, of an opportunity of distinguishing himself. The Iron Cross for Valour was already in his button-hole. There were still herrings on the plate, and the hour was only half-past eight. Fischer, by his direction, went outside to call for volunteers, while he finished the herrings. The men lay about in a couple of dismantled rooms, and in the garden at the back of the house. "Volunteers to burn a village!" roared Fischer, into the midst of the sleeping Kerle. Had he thrown a bomb among them he could not have caused a more instantaneous and universal start. Volunteers! He wanted fifteen, and here was the whole company round him like bees. He picked his fifteen, taking the men who had no wives at home in the Fatherland, and then came back to see if the mulled beer was done. By this time von Hosius had demolished the last of the herrings, and as time was short was setting about getting ready in the most systematic manner. Having pulled on his long boots, he pulled out of his portmanteau the little dagger which every officer wore to ward off the vultures of the battlefield in case of being wounded, and shoved his "Adams" revolver into his belt. Then, with a final glass of the composite beer, he sallied out to the spot where his little band was drawn waiting for him, and gave them a word or two of advice and precaution.

In truth, the undertaking was a most dangerous one. It partook, indeed, not a little of the nature of a forlorn hope. A few hundred yards in the rear of Nouilly we,

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it is true, had a *Feldwache*, but the French were nearer it on the other side by Mey and the Bois de Grimont, and had strong temptations for entering it by night. It might be that he might encounter a force of French inside the village. In that case, of what service would be his fifteen volunteers? It was almost certain that, if this contingency should not occur, the party would encounter a fierce foe in the execution of their task, and it was probable that on their return they would be shelled both by St. Quentin and les Bottes. I left Hosius giving his order, and went on to the *repli* ground, through which he had to pass to get across the wine berg, and down into the valley in which Nouilly lies. In a few minutes came the measured tread of the little party, marching at the German quick step, which is faster than that of any army I know. Von Hosius as he passed hailed me laughingly with a parting "Miss Lucy, Lucy Long," and then disappeared in the darkness. For a while we could hear the crashing of the little band through the vines, and then came the hoarse challenge of the *Feldwache* rear sentry. Then all became quiet. The group by the watchfire in the *repli* gave sufficient evidence of the ticklish character of the enterprise. For a few minutes the officer in command of the *repli* and myself were the only persons who enjoyed its genial warmth. Then through the gloom came stalking the major, and, after a long look towards Nouilly, he squatted silently down by our side. Presently another form appeared, that of the genial colonel himself, who had been moved to forsake the society of the *curé* to come and see what success von Hosius should meet with. I don't know exactly how they came, but in half an hour nearly all the officers of the battalion were around the bright wood fire. Everybody tried to appear unconcerned, but it was equally certain

everybody was fidgety. The regiment had never yet failed in any duty assigned it, and if it failed now? Nobody liked to broach the subject, but I could see it was uppermost in the mind of all. And von Hosius was a tantalisingly long time in putting us out of our suspense. An hour had gone—Nouilly was but ten minutes forward from Noisseville—and the colonel's nervousness was undisguised as he hacked at the burning log with his naked sword, and drove his spur into the leg of his chair. The major had taken to walking up and down the inside of the entrenchment, and only the adjutant exhibited a thorough nonchalance, but then he was very sleepy.

The vigilant lieutenant of the *repli* gave a smothered shout, and we all sprang to our feet. Flame-coloured smoke at last and plenty of it. But surely, suggested the major, it really cannot be so far away as that. Why that lowering smoke is on the other side of the Bois de Grimont, and must be a private bonfire of the French—not the one which von Hosius was to fire. It was too true, the alarm was a false one. The colonel sat down again moodily, and the major began to mutter something that seemed to me very like swearing. As for the adjutant he went to sleep, and I very nearly followed his example. One thing was favourable, the dead silence that reigned in the valley. It was evident that von Hosius had encountered no French in the place, else the rattle of the musketry would have been heard long ere now, and the battalion, which was standing to its arms at the various company posts, would have been lining the entrenchment with the needle-guns poked over the earthwork.

Another half hour of suspense, and then a loud "Ha!" simultaneously from the lieutenant on duty and the sentry. This time it was Nouilly, and no mistake. Von Hosius

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had taken his time, that he might do his work thoroughly. Not from one isolated house, but in six places at once, belched out the long streaks of flame against the black darkness, and the separate fires made as much haste to connect themselves as ever did commanders who were eager to feel their supports right and left. In ten minutes the whole place was in one grand blaze, the church steeple standing up in the midst of the sea of flame, as if it had round its turret the old motto of the Scottish Kirk, "*Nec tamen consumebatur.*" But, church steeple as it was, it had not the attribute of the burning bush, and a whole pyrotechnic display of sparks bore testimony to its fall. Here and there against the flame could be seen a human figure in frantic flight; and on a bluff just outside the village I saw in the strong light a woman standing wringing her hands. These were the innocent victims of war, the victims not of the Germans, but of him in whose ears the poor serfs would three months ago have shouted "Vive l'Empereur."

Presently we heard again the crashing through the vine-brake, and our outpost sentry challenge. The watchword was returned in the hearty voice of von Hosius, and in five minutes more the little party was inside the entrenchment of the *repli.* Von Hosius, of rather a portly figure, was panting with the exertion of climbing the vine-hill, but he found breath enough to greet me with "Miss Lucy, Lucy Long." The affair had been singularly successful. The duty had been executed without the necessity of exchanging a single shot. The village, which burnt till five next morning, had been so effectually fired that all the stores which it might have contained must have been burnt; and so coolly had the enterprise been gone about, that a respectable old horse which was found in one of the stables of the village was

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led back in triumph, as a trophy. I suppose the French held their fire because they did not know whither to direct it. To have shelled Nouilly would only have been to play into the hands of the Prussians, and the destroying party might have come from Servigny, Noisseville, or Montoy. I lay down among the straw, and went to sleep with the echo of "Miss Lucy, Lucy Long" still haunting my ears.

On the foreposts we came to look upon the fortresses environing the town of Metz, much as the Naples people regard and talk of Mount Vesuvius when that mountain is in an uneasy condition. During all the 3rd of October St. Julien had been quiet. St. Quentin had not emitted a single puff of smoke, and les Bottes might have been a flower-garden tended by pretty girls. The same calm reigned on the morning of the 4th up till eleven o'clock in the forenoon, and the martial population of Noisseville were taking it as easy as discipline would permit. To the left of the Brewery, an isolated house on the chaussée, a little in rear of Lauvallière and parallel with Noisseville on the south, a large body of troops were engaged in constructing large wooden barracks just in rear of the entrenchment line. These were being built for the accommodation of the troops holding the post of the Brewery, which had been reduced to ruins by the many bombardments which it had undergone. The French in les Bottes could see the progress of this work and the number of the men engaged in it; and the idea seemed to strike them that it might not be out of place to attempt to interrupt the building operations. Anyhow, they commenced rather a fierce shell fire on the unfinished barracks, and also on the unfortunate Brewery, under the shelter of which the working party was withdrawn when the first grenade came hurtling over the trees. The

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Brewery must by this time have been thoroughly well used to the visitation of shells, and there was this consolation for it, that had it been exploded bodily it could not have been ruined much more utterly than it already was. All that it was good for was that the heap of stones which once had composed a rather imposing structure afforded a kind of shelter for troops drawn up in its rear. But even this office the Brewery was now rendered incapable of performing. The shells sent its loose stones flying in all directions, and it was thus that several men were wounded. The contagion of firing was communicated by les Bottes to the foreposts. These began blazing away at each other in a very level fashion, the Germans replying to the French fire with the chassepots, the use of which they had been practising sedulously for the last few days. Everybody had got so much used to this intermittent outpost fire that the only notice it met with was a whistle occasionally from some soldier moving about our village when a bullet went singing past him, or hit the wall a yard or two above his head. From firing at the wooden barracks and the Brewery, les Bottes took it into its head to throw a few shells into Servigny, the village to our right, and then St. Julien chimed in with its great cannon balls. Noisseville occupied an intermediate position between the Brewery and Servigny; but up till about one o'clock it had unaccountably escaped the polite attentions of the two French forts. About that hour, however, a great cannon-ball came whistling across from St. Julien, crashed through the wall of a house in which most of the officers were quartered, and tumbled in among the stacked arms in an open space in the street, making a hole in which a horse might have been buried. Nobody was hurt; but the paymaster was nearly smothered with the débris which fell from the wall

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through which the great ball passed. Les Bottes followed St. Julien's example in firing into Noisseville, the latter projecting 42lb. and 64lb. shells, the former confining himself to cannon-balls. It was a great waste of powder and shot. Nobody was hurt, and all the effect was that a village already for the most part burnt and in ruins was destroyed a little more. The church was terribly wrecked by the cannon of St. Julien. Already the exterior had been knocked out of shape, but the inside retained much of its original integrity. A shell from St. Julien crashed right through the altar, and brought the cross on to the pavement in splinters. The fragment of a shell from les Bottes shivered a beautiful marble monument, splitting it right up the centre, and cutting in two the commemoration of the merits of a respectable defunct villager. The Virgin Mary, as she stood in marble against the wall, had a limb amputated, and was otherwise dismembered; and if the pastor had been in the pulpit when another shell struck it he would never have preached more. So hot became the cross-fire from the two fortresses that it was judged advisable to withdraw the troops out of the village a few hundred yards to the rear. The *Feldwachen* were of course left in their positions, as also were two companies in the *repli* by the church; but the rest fell back into an orchard behind the village. It was great fun, in a sense, to be here and listen to the French pelting the village, under the idea, no doubt, that it was full of Prussian troops. We could hear the crashing of the rafters and the smashing of the walls as the huge projectiles tore through them, the shells exploding as they struck, and sending into the air a cloud of fragments. All this time the musketry fire on the foreposts was unceasing along a large portion of the line, and anyone dropping in casually upon the scene would have

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imagined quite an important battle was in progress. So little was this the case that the troops supporting Noisseville and lying in Flanville and Retonfay were not put under arms. The whole affair was an utterly useless ignition of powder, and its only effect was to suspend for the day the construction of the wooden barracks. When the firing had ceased we came back into the village, and several found that the quarters which they had quitted at one o'clock were no longer in existence at five. A few houses more or less ground to powder in Noisseville was, however, quite a trifle when the whole village might have been called a ruin. It surprised me to observe with what extraordinary force some of the projectiles had fallen. In a field beyond the church there was a hole in the earth that might almost have served as the shaft of a mine. It marked the spot where had fallen a shell from les Bottes. The pioneers dug it out in the evening. They had to go to a depth of about six feet. The huge ugly affair had not exploded, and two men extricated it gently, and bore it in triumph, quite a little procession following, to lay it at the feet of the colonel. The shell was reckoned to be 110-pounder. Just fancy a missile of this magnitude striking a man full in the chest! It would hurl him in little pieces in all directions. Or fancy it exploding in the centre of a group, or in the heart of a column, and scattering its great skin, an inch and a half thickness of metal, in a shower of morsels, each about two inches square.

During the night, as I was told in the morning, les Bottes and St. Julien renewed the firing on Noisseville. I confess to sleeping so soundly, that I was in blessed ignorance of the circumstance, but when I turned out in the morning I fell into a hole that was the crater of an exploded shell, about two paces from the place where

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once there had been a door. Several other shells fell in the immediate vicinity, and the poor church got another blow or two. The 4th Regiment, on the morning of the 5th October, was relieved by the 44th Regiment, from Retonfay, with whom it exchanged quarters. Retonfay is a squalid village, which was included in the second line of environment. Close to it was a fine château. inhabited for the time by General Zglinitzki, who commanded the brigade. It was the turn of the 4th for a spell on rest, and the officers who, in the front line, were not at liberty to quit their commands for an hour, were now comparatively at large for the time. As soon as we reached Retonfay, and had taken up quarters, one of them was kind enough to accompany me in a ride as far as the Moselle, on the north side of Metz. We everywhere traversed the extreme edges of the foreposts, and the ride was a very interesting one. From Retonfay we struck the first line at the unfortunate Servigny—that once pretty village, at which St. Julien seemed to have so especial a spite. There was not much of Servigny to speak of—a few gable ends of walls, and here and there the walls of a house without a roof. A battalion of the 45th contrived somehow to find quarters among the ruins, and a few villagers still wandered about in a ghostly fashion. From Servigny we passed over a considerable ridge, to the charming village of Poix, lying snugly at the opening of a valley which tends downward toward the Moselle. This village is surrounded in all directions by beautiful villas, the summer residences of the wealthier inhabitants of Metz. An isolated suburb near the top of the ridge had suffered severely from the fire of St. Julien—indeed, occasional shells were bursting in it as we passed, but the village itself had not been much injured, and the German troops had respected its

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amenities in a very surprising manner. A Division General dwelt amid roses and honeysuckles, in one of the principal châteaux, built in rustic Elizabethan, and beautifully furnished—the Feldpost inhabited the gardener's rustic lodge in the grounds. Vremy lies a little to the rear in the bottom of the valley, which here assumes the character of a gorge, and the road compels a detour into it, which was repaid us by the observation of the admirable manner in which its houses and churchyard walls had been converted into defensive works, thoroughly blocking up the gorge. Leaving Vremy, and the hospitable officers who dwelt therein, we rode down the valley to Failly, a considerable village, in which, until a few days previous, had been the head-quarters of General Kummer, commanding the Landwehr, now gone across the Moselle. From Failly there is a direct road to the Moselle at Malroy, but, by a slight detour, the opportunity offered itself of getting very close to the Bois de Grimont, which was full of French troops, and of inspecting, at a comparatively short distance, the fortress of St. Julien. An officer in Failly told us laughingly, that there were two very beautiful young women in Villiers l'Orme, the village which is so near to the Bois de Grimont, and I am not certain that this information did not operate with my companion as an additional argument for visiting the place. L'Orme is a very prettily situated little village, just on the edge of the tableland on which stand Grimont and St. Julien. We saw nothing of the beautiful maidens, but the place was full of inhabitants, and the children were playing merrily about, quite regardless, to all appearance, of the fact that the place is within three hundred yards of the French outposts. L'Orme was unoccupied by the Germans during the day. At night a small party, under the

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command of an under officer, was wont to go forward, and take up a position behind it. Occasionally, stragglers from the French outposts visited it, we were told, in search of food. From the shelter of one of its houses, we could see quite easily with the naked eye, the French outposts—the men cooking or lying down, and the sentries walking to and fro. Behind was the forest, and then the Monastery of Grimont, while over the whole of the quiet little scene, St. Julien frowned grimly, casting forward his dark shadow in the afternoon sunlight. L'Orme had wonderfully escaped the ravages of war. Both parties seemed to have agreed to respect it, probably on account of the number of villagers who still continued to reside in it. I was told that not a single shell had been fired into the village. But while we were there, the shells were flying over our heads towards Vany and Charly, and it seemed strange to see the children playing in the street, the girls driving home the cows, and the old women placidly spinning in front of their doors, when the missiles were whistling through the air above their heads.

The French might have respected l'Orme, but they assuredly had no such tenderness for anybody happening to traverse the space which intervenes between l'Orme and Chieulles. The track led athwart an open field, with a hedge in the rear, and the French posts lined the wood continuously, at a distance of about five hundred yards. The distance is about half a mile, and, unless we chose to make a very considerable detour, there was no alternative but to run the gauntlet. My military friend went first, at a brisk hand canter. He had hardly shown his horse's head beyond the cover of the houses of l'Orme, when the Frenchmen commenced saluting him with chassepot bullets. I followed at a short interval,

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and as the bullets became thicker and faster, our canter became a gallop. The horses were fresh, and also desperately timid; ever as a bullet whistled past them, and cut the twigs in the hedge, they gave a bound and a shy that necessitated very close adhesion to the pig-skin. I was by no means sorry when we got into Chieulles, a village a little farther retired from the point-blank range of fire, and which had also, by mutual consent, been held as a neutral territory. There were in it plenty of inhabitants, who seemed to have got quite familiarised to their strange position, and carried on their ordinary avocations as if the war were miles away. The village is rather a large one, and contains several considerable buildings. From it our road lay to the left rear, to a *Feldwache* outside the village of Vany, and then into the village itself. The French outposts gave us one parting salute as we sallied out of Chieulles, and this evoked a response from the *Feldwache* for which we were making. We left the hostile outposts firing away at each other very briskly, and rode forward, accompanied by a cavalry officer, into Charly, a beautiful village, containing many châteaux, and standing embowered amidst orchards. Here one of the points of the battle of the 31st August was contested with great desperation. All around the village the graves lay thick, now German, now French. The bayonet had been at work that day in the environs of Charly, and in one of its alleys took place a fierce and long-continued hand-to-hand contest. It was very pretty to see how tastefully the German troops had decorated the graves of their dead comrades. They had made them up with turf, and planted flowers and shrubs on the ridge, while at the head of each stood a wooden cross, on which was painted the name and rank of him who lay below. The

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French graves were not thus tended, but neither were they neglected. Brave soldiers never draw distinctions between the last resting-places of foes and friends. The graves of the French had been surrounded by hedges of shrubs, and the cross had been set up at the head of each.

From Charly we rode on to Malroy, a considerable village lying on the Moselle, about two miles north of Forth St. Julien. It was necessary, however, to ride up the stream some distance to find the first pontoon bridge crossing it at Argancey. Some distance higher up, at Hautconcourt, there was another pontoon bridge, and close to it, at Ennery, a very large depôt of provisions and stores for the supply of the northern portion of the besieging army. Immediately on crossing the Moselle, we came among the Landwehr men. "These men need not fear comparison with the finest regiments of the regular army," that was my first remark to my companion. So far as I could discern, the only distinction lay in the fact that the Landwehr had more hair on their faces, as a general rule, than the line troops. About eight-and-twenty to two-and-thirty seemed the general age of the Landwehr men; and as regards a martial carriage they would not suffer alongside the Guards.

Riding leisurely back by a more circuitous route than that we had pursued in going, we were near Failly when the sun disappeared in a glorious setting behind the yellow crest of St. Quentin. Hardly had it disappeared when a flash came from out of the shadow over against St. Agathe. The roar of a heavy gun came booming across the valley, and the sound had not died away before there was another flash and another roar. In five minutes the whole slope for a distance of nearly a mile and a half was lit up by continual flashes of artillery fire.

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Then the batteries of St. Eloy took up the reply, with a slower but steady fire of its heavy guns, their roar coming to us deadened by the thick fog which was rising from the Moselle. The sight in the growing darkness was indescribably grand. We sat on horseback on the summit of the ridge at Poix, watching and listening, till St. Julien thought fit to chime in on his own account, and his big shells gave us notice to quit the ridge by the suburb of Poix on which we were standing. About eight o'clock we returned to Retonfay, on the plateau before which we found the brigade-general, and nearly all the officers of the battalions lying there, standing watching and listening to the gun-fire. Soon after eight it began to slacken, and presently died away altogether; all through the night both St. Julien and les Bottes kept the German lines on the alert by an occasional reminder, consisting of a 64-lb. shell.

The 6th was a quiet day on the east side, although the din came to us of a continuous bombardment from the other side of the Moselle to the north side. By special request of the troops stationed in Retonfay, there was divine service in the morning in a meadow in the village. The division chaplain officiated, and the brigadier-general was present with his staff. It was a fine sight to see the six battalions, numbering as many thousand men, drawn up in a hollow square, with the clergyman and the regimental band in the centre. The service commenced with a hymn, in which all the troops joined with fervour. Then the minister preached a kind of informal sermon. He selected no Scripture text, his text was the duty of a Christian soldier in war time. His words evidently came from the heart, and as evidently went to the heart. When he spoke of the friends at home longing for tidings from the front and yet half afraid to

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hear them lest they should learn that the loved one had fallen in battle, many were the heads bent down on the manly chests, and many a gallant soldier held his hand before his eyes to hide the starting tear. It was remarkable what an effect the chaplain's words had in stimulating correspondence when the service was over. Round each Feldwebel there was quite a little crowd eager to obtain the "Correspondence Karte" on which the troops mostly wrote their brief epistles, and the post corporal had enough to do to carry the great bag with which he went over to the Feldpost in Flanville. A little after the service I was sitting with the paymaster and another officer, when a knock came to the door, and there entered a great hulking fellow from Dantzic, who sheepishly asked the paymaster to accommodate him with paper money for his bullion. How much do you think he had? Why, counting pfennigs and a queer collection of kreutzers, he could make up just one thaler, and this huge remittance the great honest manly fellow wished to send to the Frau away on the shore of the Baltic. It was only three shillings, but it was the last stiver the man had, and he would go without his glass of beer till next pay day came round. Fancy an English soldier coming to his officer with a handful of half-pence for conversion into paper money! But a German regiment is one great brotherhood, and the paymaster pocketed the coppers and gave the man the paper thaler with a kindly word and look, for has he not a Frau of his own in Königsberg, whose portrait lies against that broad chest of his?

In the evening there was a camp fire, an institution not unknown at Wimbledon in the early days of the Volunteer movement, when as yet the encampment was but small, and when Lord Elcho's sonorous voice could be heard over the whole gathering. During peace time,

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there is a camp fire—or a gathering equivalent to it—once a week in every Prussian regiment, to which the married officers bring their good ladies, and whither also the "beauty and fashion" of the garrison town are invited. "Beauty and fashion" were represented in Retonfay by a few French crones of fabulous age, who confined their remarks to muttering "Mon Dieu" continuously, and who, I suspect, would gladly have poisoned the whole regiment if they could have done so without risk to themselves. But nevertheless we had our camp fire, and that, too, under quite imposing circumstances. The spot selected was a pretty meadow by the side of a stream, about two hundred yards from the village. An officer of taste, and with a capital eye for landscape gardening, had devoted himself from a very early hour in the morning to perfecting the arrangements. With a fatigue party, he had thrown a pretty rustic bridge across the stream, and lined the path leading to it with green boughs. With these, too, he had enclosed a large circle, with a smaller area close by for the band, and in the centre of the larger circle a great bonfire had been built, its foundation raised by the earth excavated from a trench dug around it. All the chairs in the village were collected, and most of the tables, and placed in picturesque confusion around this central point. The officers began to gather about five o'clock. They were all so smart that I felt ashamed of my old tweed shooting jacket and dilapidated wideawake. The parade coats had been dug out of the bottom of portmanteaus, and looked quite spruce and natty. Boots had been polished to a pitch that might have stimulated the admiration of Day and Martin. Spurs and buttons glittered brightly in the setting sun. Then our worthy colonel —Oberst von Tietzen-Hennig—made his appearance, accompanied by his staunch ally the major. The colonel,

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too, was evidently on ceremony, for he wore the sword which King Wilhelm had presented to him with his own hands the evening of one of the battles of the 1866 campaign. All rose to greet the commanding officer, and immediately that he was seated, the band struck up. So thoroughly was the affair managed, that an elaborately written programme of the music was laid on the colonel's table, of which I took a copy. It may interest English readers to know what music a Prussian regimental band played, while the bass accompaniment was furnished by the roar of the guns over against us on the other side of the Moselle. Here is a copy of the programme:

Fest Overture	Fischer.
An der schönen blauen Donau, Walzer . .	Strauss.
La Belle Amazone	Loischhorn.
March Potpourri.	Bach.
Künstler Fest Quadrille	Hermann.
Fanfare Militaire	Ascher.

It was a very pretty sight. About forty officers were present, grouped picturesquely around the tables. Military servants circulated everywhere, serving the company with glasses of beer. The outside of the bough-enclosed circle was lined with the men of the various battalions, who crowded to the spot, under the attraction of the music. More hearty good fellowship could not be imagined. The colonel and the youngster who won his silver shoulder straps but the day before were on the most equal footing. In an interval of the music a young officer came into the circle who had just returned from the hospital at Düsseldorf, whither a bullet through the foot in the battle of the 31st August had sent him. Then he had been only a Feldwebel, but he had got his lieutenancy when lying on his back, and this was his first appearance among his comrades since his promotion. As he came forward the colonel rose and called for a bumper to the health of

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his gallant young friend. The young fellow bowed and blushed as all obeyed the chief's order, following the draught with a cheer that must have been heard at St. Julien. Then the colonel was good enough to disarrange the programme for the introduction of "Rule Britannia" as a special token of consideration to the Engländer present. By this time the darkness had begun to fall, and the bonfire was formally set fire to, the circle breaking up from the tables, and re-forming around its cheerful blaze. The band exhausted the programme, and took to playing song tunes, the officers chiming in lustily with their voices, and the men on the outskirts taking up the chorus. The scene was one in which a painter would have delighted—the bright woodfire lighting up the faces of the circle around it, and ever and anon, as it shot up more brightly, dissipating the thick darkness beyond, and flashing on the faces of the men through the boughs. But no painter could give effect to what was to me the most weird phase of the affair—the measured thud of the cannonading sounding between every pause in the music or lull in the din of the conversation; and it was strange, too, to reflect that, as we sat here cheerily, we were still within the range of the great guns of St. Julien. I could not help thinking of the effect which a forty-two pound shell would have had had it fallen and exploded right in the heart of the bonfire. The good fellows of the 4th, however, troubled themselves with no such speculations. It was sufficient for them that St. Julien was quiet, and that the fire was cheery, the company good, and the beer reasonably plentiful, and palatable. In the course of the evening one of the captains gave a toast, which was received with intense enthusiasm—the health of the gallant comrades who had won the decoration of the Iron Cross. It

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was on the breast of at least half those who sat round the fire. When the cheering had subsided the band struck up the "Paris" march, a *souvenir* of 1813, in remembrance of which campaign the Iron Cross was first instituted. About half-past eight the colonel gave the toast of "Our Comrades of the Artillery," in honour of some gentlemen of that service who were present, and then, after the band had played "God Save the King," said good night, and went away to his supper. I followed him in a very short time, but when I came outside to smoke my cigar in the moonlight, before turning in among the straw, I could still hear the merry chorus down in the meadow by the camp-fire. It was then about eleven o'clock, and how long after the last of the roisterers may have kept it up I have not the slightest idea.

The foggy morning of the 7th October ushered in what turned out to be the most important and determined sortie made by Bazaine since the failure of the 31st of August. I know not whether the French gave to the affair a name; the Germans recognized it as the "Schlacht bei Maizières." Battles there were in plenty in this bloody campaign that showed a larger total of killed and wounded; but the "Schlacht bei Maizières" made widows and orphans in the Fatherland far beyond proportion; for the men who bore the brunt of it were husbands and fathers,—the stout Landwehrmen of the Division Kummer. I had quitted Retonfay early in the grey morning with the intention of making the complete circuit of the environment of Metz before my return. The morning was extremely misty. As I reached the eminence at Poix I could barely see Mount St. Quentin above the fog in the valley, the sun's rays striking upon its warm grey peak. It seemed as if a general armistice

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had been declared; even the forepost fire had dropped. Crossing the Moselle at Argancey, I made first for the Château of Amelange, and afterwards in a direction due Metz-ward, until I reached the furthest *Feldwache* at Maxe. Then I struck across the valley, inclining rather to the rear, first to Grandes and then to Petites Tapes, in both of which there lay only an under-officer's guard of nine men; and avoiding Ladonchamps, by advice, I reached St. Rémy, where I found on duty the 59th Landwehr Regiment. Thence my journey lay still athwart the remotest foreposts to Norroy and Plesnois, the latter village being in the heart of the Bois de Saulny, and my road then lay straight southward on St. Hubert, on the south-west of Mount St. Quentin. I detail the different stages of this ride as it was right across the theatre of the afternoon's fight, and because the quietude everywhere in the morning formed so strong a contrast to the sudden hurly-burly of the afternoon.

Near Plesnois my horse cast a shoe, and as the road was rugged I was rather in a fix, when there rode past a staff officer attached to the head-quarters of Baron Schüler von Senden, commanding the 2nd Division of the Landwehr. This gentleman was quartered in Maizières, and he most courteously invited me to return with him thither and be his guest for the night. On the return journey this gentleman gave me some information which contributed materially to an understanding of the events which followed. In the bombardment of the two previous days the position occupied by the batteries of German heavy guns had been at Frenecourt, near the commencement of the rise of the hills some distance to the south-west of Maizières. To speak more precisely, they were stationed on the low heights of Le Horiment, on the rising ground behind which there stood an observatory

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commanding the whole plain. But the Germans had batteries considerably to the front of Frenecourt. Six field batteries stood mid-way between it and Sennecourt, and on the 6th they had pushed forward a second battery as far as Sennecourt itself. From these several positions the bombardment of St. Eloy had been going forward intermittingly, and also a shell-fire into the village of Ladonchamps, some little distance nearer Metz than St. Rémy, on the line of railway. Till lately this village had been reckoned neutral territory, but on the 2nd October the French had seized it, and established a battery in front of it. The village itself had been burnt the same night by German shells, but still the French had retained the position, and the German fire in the intervening days had been partly directed to the dislodgment of the enemy from a position which was important, as the occupants of it could enfilade the whole front across the valley. On the 6th nearly a thousand shells had been thrown into Ladonchamps and the neighbourhood, and late in the evening the French had evacuated the shattered fragments of a once smiling village. The Germans had at once thrown forward troops in its direction, establishing their *replis* in its rear, and sending forward sergeants' parties to occupy it and Grandes and Petites Tapes villages, to which its possession was the key. St. Rémy constituted the chief support, and here lay the 59th Regiment of the Landwehr. Maxe, close to the river, and considerably in advance, was occupied, as I already knew, by outposts detailed by the 10th Army Corps, from the other side of the Moselle. The two divisions of the Landwehr stretched right athwart the valley from the bridge at Argancey, where they touched the 10th Army Corps, to near Marange, where they met the 3rd Corps, and to the Landwehrmen was thus con-

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fided the duty of keeping the flat alluvial tract on the western bank of the Moselle. This was the substance of the information which my friend of the staff communicated to me on our ride to Maizières. Here I found the head-quarters of General von Kummer. About one o'clock I was sitting at lunch with two staff officers in an arbour in his garden, when the guns of the German batteries by Sennecourt began to give tongue. "Only a few Frenchmen loafing round Ladonchamps," observed one of the officers. "There will be nothing serious to-day; there is too much mist in the valley." Certainly it seemed as if he must be right. When I had been on the heights at Sennecourt I could not see the villages in the valley below, nor the Cathedral of Metz. Fort St. Quentin, our constant landmark, had been utterly invisible. But the roar of the guns grew louder and louder, and then came first one great boom, and then another, from the big guns lying behind at Frenecourt. The officers fidgeted, but still would not own that anything was the matter. But their *nonchalance* gave way when an aide-de-camp came up at the gallop, spreading the alarm everywhere as he went, and dashing on to the general's quarters for instructions to guide the front. In five minutes more we were all in the saddle, and, after a short gallop, were looking out on the scene of action from the fringe of the wood in front of the Châteaux of Brieux and Amelange. That the reader may understand the tactics of Bazaine and the manner in which they were foiled, it will be necessary to give a brief description of the ground. From Metz to Maizières there is a long trough, with a flat bottom—the alluvial margin of the Moselle. This tract is about four English miles wide. On the west it is bounded by the heights I have already named, and nearer Metz by those

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of Norroy and Saulny. On the east it is bounded by a lower series of bluffs, on which stand the villages of Olgy and Malroy; but between them and the flat bottom runs the Moselle, infringing considerably on the flat expanse just opposite Olgy. Across this bottom, at the narrowest part thus formed, lies a series of villages—the two Tapes and St. Rémy, with Maxe and Ladonchamps respectively slightly to the east and west front. More or less, there were German troops in all those. The dispositions detailed to me by the staff officer had been substantially maintained. Bazaine had laid his scheme with great art. Covered by the dense fog, he had made his dispositions with such adroitness that when it lifted, a little past one, his arrangements were already all but complete. In the first instance, he directed a strong assault on Ladonchamps. The Landwehr outpost held the place as if they were 10,000 instead of 100 men, and the French sent their infantry swarming into it, while their artillery played upon it. "Only an attempt to re-occupy Ladonchamps," quoth my friend of the staff, as he lit a fresh cigar; "the guns will teach them the folly of that, and we can go back to our arbour." It seemed, truly, if any argument could be convincing, that the German artillery must be so. The white spurts of smoke were visible all round the valley. On the right front the batteries at Sennecourt were hard at work, and also others nearer us on the flat, while the great guns at Frenecourt were sending shells at a long range right over Ladonchamps in among the advancing French. Then, on our left, before Amelange, two other batteries were maintaining a semi-cross fire; and from the bluffs, on the other side of the Moselle, between Olgy and Malroy, the Prussian field artillery were also roaring. But my friend of the staff was not, for an hour or two at all

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events, to see the arbour. The attack on Ladonchamps was a diversion. Suddenly the villages of Grandes and Petites Tapes, of St. Rémy and Maxe were overwhelmed by a cataract of Frenchmen. The battalion of the 59th Landwehr which held St. Rémy would not fall back, as it should have done in common prudence, but stood up there in the street till the French having played upon it with their artillery, and rained on it chassepot and mitrailleuse bullets, finally pushed backwards the shattered remnant on to the chaussée by dint of sheer numbers. The Fusilier battalion of the 58th occupied Grandes Tapes, and it occupied Grandes Tapes when the fight was done, but the occupation consisted of the dead and the wounded. The battalion would not give ground, and may be said to have been annihilated as it stood, the men with their backs to the wall and their faces to the foe. It afterwards transpired that 300 men of this battalion were made prisoners, after a desperate resistance, and sent into Metz. The other battalions of the same regiment suffered terribly. So far, then, Bazaine had succeeded. He had re-occupied the chain of villages athwart the valley, and had got a few batteries of artillery out to their front to reply to the German fire. But the status quo he neither wished to, nor could retain. The German artillery, throwing its projectiles from three sides of the parallelogram, interfered with the realization of the latter conception. As regarded the former, it seemed clear that Bazaine would not have done what he had if he did not contemplate something more. That something, I have not the remotest doubt, was a sortie to establish connections with Thionville. His tactics were well conceived. From St. Rémy and the two Tapes he kept the German fire engrossed, both musketry and artillery. He sent forward from Grandes Tapes great swarms

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of tirailleurs, who fared extremely ill at the hands of Landwehr men. But, besides this, he massed in the rear what was, beyond all question, a very large force. There must have been nearly 20,000 in all on the bank of the Moselle, and under cover of the houses of Maxe. The head of this force he hurled forward to cut through the German cincture where it was weakest, close to the river. The moment was a critical one. Those regiments of the Landwehr which had not already been sent forward against the villages were too far to the westward to be in time to meet this attack as it ought to be met—directly face to face. But the 10th Army Corps had been crossing the pontoon bridge, and massing between the river and Amelange. Their general, Voigts-Rhetz, was in nominal command of the day's operations, and he gave the order for several regiments to advance. It was a sight never to be forgotten. First came the Fusiliers, extending at a rapid run into skirmishing order, and covering the whole plain with their long thin lines. Then the dense columns of companies of the Grenadiers, the bands playing and the colours unfurled—unwonted sight. But all the work was not left wholly for the infantry to do. The artillery, for the moment, left the villages alone, and concentrated their fire on the advancing columns of the French by the Moselle. There was but little response from the French field artillery, but the sullen sides of St. Julien flashed out smoke and fire, and from the earthworks of St. Eloy came missiles at the shorter ranges. The mitrailleuse venomously sounded its angry whirr, making the skirmishers recoil nervously as they crossed the line of its fire, and tearing chasms in the fronts of the solid masses of which they were the forerunners. The artillery and the skirmishers were enough for the French. The dense columns staggered and then broke. Through

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my glass I could see a continuous *sauve qui peut* into the village of Maxe. But when they had once got stone and lime between them and the Germans, the French were obstinate and would go no further. In vain the German artillery pounded into the villages, advancing closer and closer in alternate order of batteries with a precision and rapidity that could not have been exceeded on Woolwich-common. That obstinate battery in front of Grandes Tapes would not cease, and the French tirailleurs still lined the chaussée in its front. By this time it was nearly four o'clock, and there was a lull on our side that seemed ominous. As we stood in this suspense a staff officer galloped along the front line with orders for a general advance to take the villages by storm. The attack he hurriedly told me was to consist of the four brigades of the Landwehr, with a division of the 10th Army Corps on the left and supporting. In a few minutes more the command came sounding along the line, and the men sprang from their cover and went forward with that steady quick step so characteristic of the German marching. The shells from the battery in front of Grandes Tapes tore through the line, the mitrailleuse and chassepot bullets poured against it their leaden hail, but still the Landwehr, silent and stern, went steadily to the front. The oldest veteran in the field was never in a more furious fire than that to which the centre of this line was exposed. General von Brandenstein, commanding the third brigade of the Landwehr, was shot down close to me, and several of his staff were wounded. At length the entrenchments were reached, behind which were lying the shattered remnants of the 59th and 58th Landwehr. The fraternisation consisted in the cry of "Hurrah Preussen!" and then "Vorwärts—immer vorwärts!" and the line threw itself to its front at a run. The gunners

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from the battery, brave men and stubborn, had barely time to run round the corner before the Landwehrmen were upon them. The guns they left perforce. In the villages the French made a last stand, but it had been better for them that they had run away at first. The Landwehrmen, with less of the conventional warrior in them than the Line, were not so much inclined to give quarter as are the professional soldiers. With many a Frenchman this afternoon the shrift consisted of a bayonet thrust. They fought like devils in the narrow ways of the villages, and used the mitrailleuses with rare judgment and effect. But then there came the steady inexorable stride forward of the Landwehrmen, the bayonet lent force with that huge thigh and back power which is the leading characteristic in an athletic sense of the German physique, and the villages were cleared of all save victors, dead, and wounded.

To the Landwehr must be conceded the honour of the fray. They it was who checked the rush of the French advance by holding the villages till they had not a man that could stand upright and fire the needle gun. To them also was entrusted the grand final advance which swept the French out of the villages. I had seen the German Line soldiers fight before this day. I had learned to believe that they could do aught any soldiers in the world could do. But it was not till now that I gauged the calibre of the Landwehr, how that in all things they were the equals of their brethren of the Line. Cool in the intrenchments, when they lay calmly in position, picking up the bullets that fell among them—resolute, indomitable, in their steady quick march forward, and then irresistible in the final rush with which they carried the villages—they were troops to delight the heart of a man with a soldierly instinct. Nothing was more

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observable than the cool manner in which the wounded went to the rear in the general advance—every man depending on himself if he could walk at all, declining the services of assistants to help him out of the fray. Nor were they slight wounds with which these gallant fellows struggled unaided to the rear. One, for instance, to whom I spoke, was shot right through the lungs, and at every step his breath came panting through the bullet-hole. It might be that he struggled on till he reached the straw in the court-yard of the Château of Amelange, where the doctors were toiling up to their elbows in blood; but I fear his was one of the many bodies that checkered the green fields behind the advance. Gallant fellows as they were, it went to one's heart to see the Landwehr fight and die. Not like a linesman could they take their life in their hand and go down into the fray conscious that nobody would hunger because they fell. For every second Landwehrman that fell at Maizières there was a widow in the Fatherland, and, with children of my own around my hearth, my heart swelled to think of the number of unconscious orphans made that sunshiny autumn afternoon in the pleasant villages and the quiet plains of Deutschland. Pray God that, fight who may, there may be no more deadly battles in which the Landwehr shall have to take part. Not that, as it seemed to me, they dwelt upon the thought of Frau and Kinder. The hairy Kerl, with the grey in his beard, and who knew how many young birds were in his nest, went straight to the front as boldly as the sprightly young volunteer who had only a girl to weep for him if he fell. But they are a prayerful people those Germans, and I fancied, when the word "Vorwärts" came sounding through the ranks, that many a man bent his head for a moment into his hand, as if he were entering a church.

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On my way to the rear, after the brunt of the fight was over, I looked into the court-yard of the Château of Amelange, where the doctors were hard at work. The men lay all around waiting for their turn, and smoking like so many lime-kilns. Here already by five o'clock there were quite two hundred wounded, and those in Amelange were but a handful compared to the gross number that had been wounded. The doctors, with shirt sleeves up and coat off, were toiling with blood-smeared hands with cool but nimble dexterity. One of them seemed something between a cannibal and a butcher as he looked up for a moment from a case with a bloody knife-blade between his teeth.

In the evening, postal celerity being an object, I left Maizières to ride to Courcelles. Immediately after crossing the pontoon bridge at Argancey, a detour became necessary. The German artillery was still firing in the moonlight from the heights above Olgy, and St. Julien was sluggishly throwing projectiles on to the tableland, seemingly to shut up their fire. All the ground in the rear of Charly and toward Fany was pitted with shells that had fallen and burst during the day. A brisk musketry fire was still going on in front of Chieulles and l'Orme, so quiet when I had ridden through them in the morning. The French, pouring down out of the Bois de Grimont, had made a feigned attack in considerable force up this valley, and the old women and children in Chieulles must have had their equanimity not a little disturbed. All I could hear as I rode through the villages was, that a good many had been killed and wounded; and I met a large ambulance train coming forward into the fire from out the village of Vremy. Poix had been shelled during the day, but all was now quiet there. A little further on I came to the rear of Servigny and

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Noisseville, from which I met my friends of the 4th returning singing triumphantly. The French from Mey and the slope in front of St. Julien had sent three battalions into Nouilly, and thence had attempted to storm the *repli* in front of Noisseville, but had been repulsed with considerable loss, the German artillery driving them out of Nouilly into the wood. I was in time to accompany a tentative advance of the German artillery along the chausée right under the earthworks of Little Belle Croix, which was chiefly remarkable from the circumstance that St. Julien made no effort to arrest the operation. I afterwards learnt that there was further fighting in the early part of the night in front of St. Rémy, and that a battalion of the 81st had been forced to retake Ladonchamps at the bayonet point, losing in the task five officers and over one hundred men.

It is not difficult, I think, to form a tolerably correct opinion as to the plan of Bazaine's tactics of the 7th. I am aware that the importance of this sortie has been belittled by testimony from the interior of Metz, but I have a habit of believing in what I see, and the evidence of eyesight was corroborated as well by prisoners taken in the affair as by conversations with responsible and well-informed men on the other side, after the capitulation of Metz. At the lowest estimate Bazaine must have had 100,000 men, who, so far as the defence of Metz was concerned, were superfluous, and, therefore, detrimental. A hundred thousand men will sooner consume a given quantity of provisions than will twenty thousand; and when the larger number reach starvation point, the surrender of everything—field troops, garrison, fortress, and town—must occur. But for their appreciation of this eventuality, nothing would have pleased the Germans better than to have opened a fair passage to Bazaine any

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hour in the twenty-four. He might have come outside the cordon and welcome with 100,000 men, and in the course of the following day, when he was holding a council of war, and debating, *more Gallico*, whether to march on Sedan or strike southward and cut the German communications, a hundred thousand Teutons and more would have fallen upon him from all points of the compass and smitten him hip and thigh. But if his field army had been chopped into fragments, the fortress of Metz, with its garrison left inside, would still have confronted the besiegers, and its reduction would have been postponed in proportion to the procrastination of the starvation point effected by the fewer mouths to feed. Of all this Bazaine, a capable man, whose merits, within certain limits, the Germans acknowledged frankly, could not have failed to be aware. He objected to capitulation simpliciter in the fortress, or to the alternative of capitulation or annihilation in the open field. But there lay the Moselle, beckoning him on to the half-way house of Thionville, and beyond Thionville, at the distance of a single forced march, lay the frontier. Oh! if he could only dash out through that vexatious cordon. True, across the broad plain lay the divisions of the Landwehr. A regular soldier himself, Bazaine had probably learned to despise the Garde Mobile with all the contempt of a veteran used to command veteran troops; and nothing was more natural than for a Frenchman to reason from a false analogy that, as the Garde Mobile, so were the Landwehr. The result gave him to digest his misconception as best he might. But the conception of Bazaine's effort was creditable to his knowledge of the military art. While he made his grand effort against the Landwehr in the valley, he did his best to keep the other sections of the environing circle from finding leisure to concentrate in support

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of them. The attack on Vany, L'Orme, and Chieulles was well calculated to engross the 10th Army Corps; that from Mey on Noisseville and Servigny might well perform the same office with regard to the 1st Army Corps; the 7th Army Corps might be supposed to have their hands pretty well full with the sortie against Peltre, Mercy-le-Haut, and Ars-Laquenexy, and with luck this sortie, too, might get through as far as the depôt at Courcelles, and bring back of its abundance to the Gardes Nationaux, who were plying the big guns on the ramparts, and to the hungry citizens. The well-conceived feint against Ladonchamps was intended to keep the 3rd Army Corps in play, occupying as it did the slopes between the valley and the fort of Plappeville. And then —there was but the Landwehr to cope with, and surely 40,000 veteran French troops might crash through the lines of these citizen soldiers, weakened as those lines were by elongation across the whole plateau. Then, hey for Thionville! only ten miles off, where a secure lair might be had under the guns of that fortress while the columns caught their wind; and then, picking up by the way what superfluous troops there might be in its garrison, who could say what next for an army with no impedimenta? Had the design succeeded Metz would have been a tougher nut for the Germans to crack than ever, for their policy of starvation would have been seriously compromised.

The two grand blunders which defeated the scheme were the misconception on Bazaine's part of the strength, prowess, and effective dispositions of the Landwehr, and the mistaken idea that his feints to the right and left would so engross the 10th and 3rd Army Corps as to prevent them from aiding the Landwehr to give him check on the plateau. His error on the former point

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must have come to him when he saw his regulars recoiling pell-mell from the Landwehrmen in the villages; the salvoes of artillery sent by the 10th Army Corps from Malroy, Olgy, and other heights on the east side of the Moselle, and by the 3rd Army Corps from Frenecourt, Sennecourt, and the heights above St. Rémy, all coigns of vantage on the bluffs on the western fringe of the valley, must have made him comprehend that a feigned attack, even if inconsiderable, was not capable of engrossing the full attention of a German Army Corps. The batteries on the positions I have named enfiladed him ruinously. Down the valley there tore a fierce direct fire from the batteries at Amelange and those in front of Brieux, which advanced by alternate batteries with as much coolness and precision as I have seen the troops of a cavalry regiment working in the Phœnix Park; while from the heights on either side came such a cross-fire that I was filled with respect for the troops of Bazaine, when I realised the fact that they waited for the infantry assault to dislodge them from their position. Add to Bazaine's disadvantages that he was miserably short of field artillery, and the conclusion is obvious that he could not but have failed under the circumstances, while the deduction was no less patent that the frustration of any future attempt was equally inevitable.

On the morning of the 8th, the aspect of affairs was still threatening. It seemed as if the turn had come round of the 1st Army Corps on the east side of the environment. When the sun rose the French were seen accumulated in dense masses between Fort St. Julien and the village of Mey. Both St. Julien and les Bottes maintained a continuous if somewhat discursive cannonade, making the stones fly all about the village of Noisseville, whither I had hurried on the first alarm. From 7 A.M.

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till early in the forenoon, there came the din of warm artillery fire from the direction of Peltre and Mercy-le-Haut. At daylight the whole of our first and second lines were drawn forward in support of the first line, and the advance posts had fallen back. At nine a battery of German field-artillery opened on the French infantry from the angle of the church of Noisseville, and located in a cunning overbank emplacement, was not to be dislodged by all that St. Julien and les Bottes could do with that intent. About mid-day, however, a furious pelt of rain came down and washed the heart out of the French, if there had been any in them from the first. Gradually the forts, as the infantry retreated into their rear, gave up firing, after having thrown in the course of the morning over 100 shells into the fragments of the village of Noisseville. The fire gradually died away to the south, and about 2 P.M. came the order for the reserves and the artillery to return to quarters, and for the outposts to be reinstated in their old positions.

The rain which quenched the ardour of the French lasted with scarcely any intermission for forty-eight hours, and made its impression on the health of the besieging army. Bronchitis and diarrhœa were the chief complaints engendered; typhus, which soon after became almost an epidemic, now first gained serious head. One saw waggon load after waggon load of sick men going down to Courcelles. Much might have been done, that was not done, both by German organisation and by those other organisations set on foot through the liberality of nations sympathising with human suffering, to ease the hardships of those poor fellows. It would not have been difficult to have organised a cheap and serviceable ambulance service to have accommodated both sick and wounded. Around Metz, in the third line, there are everywhere

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practicable roads. District depôts might easily have been established, one, say, at Ste. Barbe, another at Olgy, a third somewhere behind Sennecourt, and a fourth at Gravelotte. To these depôts might have been consigned the sick and wounded Germans from the several regiments and brigades—the poor fellows whom I saw making long weary journeys to Courcelles, in springless country carts or on foot. Between each of these depôts there might have been a continuous service of vehicles resembling elongated Irish jaunting cars. Such vehicles are the true pattern of an ambulance. They would hold a man on either foot rest slightly broadened, two more on the seats, and one above the well in the centre. Four poles at each corner, with a tarpaulin, would make an efficient protection from the weather. Thus, by easy stages, and resting at intervals in the depôts, the sick and wounded might have been brought down in ease and comfort to Courcelles, whence the trains were ready to convey them to Germany. These hospital trains were the most complete things of the kind I had ever seen. The carriages were built on the American model, with entrance at either end. There were two tiers of beds down each side, three in each tier, and the beds had every appliance calculated to give comfort to the occupants. One carriage was devoted to the purposes of a laboratory, another formed a living and sleeping room for the volunteer attendants, and a third was a kitchen. To a callousness for suffering, which must be characterised as general, there were two exceptions which must be named. One was the German depôt at Courcelles, of which Baron von Kramm was the life and soul, and which did an immensity of good without pretension. The Baron himself was one of the most energetic men I have ever met, and wrought day and night with the supremest

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contempt for the good things of this life. The other exception was the branch of the English ambulance, which had its head-quarters in Remilly, under the control of Mr. Austin Lee, a young gentleman endowed with unquestionable administrative talent and great energy; he was ably supported by his assistant, Captain Norman, and within the sphere of my own observation accomplished much really good work.

On the 11th, a French deserter from Metz was brought into Retonfay; he belonged to the 59th of the Line, and to the Army Corps of which Marshal Lebœuf had the command. His regiment, along with two others, was lying, he reported, on the slope on which stands the village of Vantoux, a little behind Mey. He told us that his desertion was a matter of arrangement with a large body of the soldiery. Lots had been drawn who should make the first attempt, and if the experiment succeeded, the others were to desert likewise. He dodged along the verge of the Bois de Grimont, and then came sneaking through the vine-bergs till he reached the German *Feldwache* behind Nouilly. Many Frenchmen were observed apparently watching his career. The man was an Alsatian, as, he said, were most of the men of his regiment, and he spoke German well. He said the French soldiers lying around Metz were tired of their lives. Nominally, the force to which he belonged lived under canvas, but the stench in the tents was so strong, by reason of cutaneous diseases among the men, that almost all slept in the open air. This for several days before must have been tantamount to sleeping in a water-butt. The skin disease was chiefly of a scorbutic character, caused by the want of vegetables, the absence of salt, and the almost exclusive living on horse-flesh. The poor fellow's mouth and face were in a very bad state from scurvy.

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He stated that numbers of his fellows were similarly affected. The spirit of disaffection was, he reported, almost universal; even the Guards were tainted with it. Since the defeat of the 7th the troops had positively refused to make any more sorties, and it was with difficulty that the officers could prevail on the men to go upon outpost duty. Of bread, the deserter said, there was considerable scarcity, and the quality was bad; the quantity of rice served out was a tea-cup full per day between two men. This, with the bread, was all the food besides horseflesh the men had. They had eaten the horses of several cavalry regiments, and were now masticating battery horses.

Confined to quarters for several days, by an accident which befel me on the 10th October, I had leisure to note that inattention to sanitary conditions, which was the weak point in the otherwise almost perfect organisation of the German army. The French inhabitants around Metz were outer barbarians in this respect. The hamlet of Tully Veolan, as described in *Waverley*, was an elysium of cleanliness compared with the little French villages which everywhere dot the territory around the city, and in which were quartered the bulk of the besieging army. Before every door a large and venerable dunghill reeked; in the back cellars, and in the sties immediately behind the houses, dwelt colonies of swine, whose lairs, apparently, had not been purified within the memory of the oldest inhabitant. In dry, warm weather, these dunghills and pigsties impregnated the air with the pungent fumes of ammonia; in wet weather, their ooze percolated everywhere, and was indescribable fœtid. Thus the Germans were the inheritors of nuisances not of their own engendering. But they were by no means behindhand in the race of nuisance manufacturing. The entrails of slaugh-

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tered cattle, instead of being collected into one deep receptacle, and there buried deeply after having been strewed with quicklime, were strewed at random around the villages and in the gardens, with a little loose earth thrown over them, through the interstices of which a piece of paunch was often visible; and no disinfectants were used. Then the establishment of, and the enforcement of resort to, latrines, placed in suitable localities and assiduously disinfected, seemed to be almost wholly neglected, and the consequences were, a state of filth in the immediate vicinity of the houses, to allude to which further would compel the use of plainer phraseology than the reader might stomach. It is quite an erroneous belief that it is important only in warm weather to study sanitary conditions. Cold, raw weather, with fog, opens the pores of the human animal nearly as much as the most relaxing tropical climate, and is far more depressing to the spirits. Open pores, and dulled spirits, are the conditions exactly fitting a man for the reception of malarious particles floating in the air; and a heavy fog, when the ground sweats again, and the air is almost stagnant, is just the atmosphere in which one can hardly move without coming in contact with such particles.

Living as I did, with regimental, as contradistinguished from staff officers, I enjoyed considerable opportunities for estimating the thoroughness of the German system of military training and education. A German general ought to be a good despatch-writer, considering the training in this line which he must have undergone. He began to write despatches as soon as he acquired a separate command, were it only of half a company. The despatch system of the German army is perfect, and the compilation of an accurate and detailed narrative of each campaign ought to be very easy. Take an instance. From

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Retonfay, on the morning of the 12th October were transmitted to divisional head-quarters, the despatches from the 4th Regiment, recounting the doings of that contingent in the action of Noisseville, on the 31th of August and 1st of September. The colonel sent in his summary of the manœuvres of the three battalions under his command. The major of each battalion likewise made his report of the proceedings of his own battalion, and every captain or officer in command of a company, also sent forward a succinct statement of his company's doings. These reports were accompanied by a chart on a large scale, showing the positions of the regiment at various periods of the battle, and drawn in this instance by a young lieutenant of our mess, the most accurate and rapid military topographist I have ever known. To be a practical draughtsman is imperative with every German officer. The puzzle with me was to find out what accomplishment is not imperative. The prickles which surround the rose of a commission are many and sharp, and, after all, the rose (at least in a nursery-gardening sense) is no great thing. Take the case, for instance, of my own especial comrade in the 4th, which presented no exceptional features. He came to the regiment from the gymnasium, in the capacity of avantageur. An avantageur is neither more nor less than a private soldier who aspires to a commission. On joining he had to pass an examination to demonstrate his general scholarship. For twelve months he served in the ranks, rising meanwhile to the non-commissioned rank of Vicefeldwebel, and then he went for a year to the military school. On leaving this, he had to pass an examination on everything relating to the art military, and then he came back to the regiment as a Degen fähnrich, that is to say, as the wearer of a sword without commissioned rank, for six

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months longer. The officers of the regiment then voted him eligible for a commission, and expressed their readiness, by the same vote, to accept him as a comrade and a credit to the service; this step being an indispensable prelude to a commission. Whereupon the King was graciously pleased to sign his commission as second lieutenant, a rank which he had contentedly held for six years, and may hold still, for aught I know to the contrary. He wore the medals for 1866; he had commanded the company for the last two months, because his seniors had been killed off; he was looking forward with hope to be a premier lieutenant in the course of another year, and a captain in perhaps ten more. His pay in war-time was about 11*l.* 10*s.* a month, in peace he had not much more than about half as much. And he was a thoroughly contented, even-minded, German gentleman, proud of the service, proud that he bore a commission in it, very hungry for the Iron Cross, fond of fun, and fonder still of work and fighting. I have simply cited him as a typical example; his fellows were as like him as peas. Who would not like to see a few peas of such a pod in the British army?

Reluctantly obliged to quit the front, as the result of the accident already alluded to, I spent the time from the 14th to the morning of the 18th invalided in Saarbrück. Having partially recovered, and reaching Remilly early in the forenoon of the 18th, I found ready to start five fourgons belonging to the English Ambulance Company. These were about to start for a journey round Metz, and I had the opportunity afforded me of a seat in one of the carriages. Our journey to Corny lay behind the foreposts through a chain of villages in the rear of the great bulk of the Prussian regiments in the south of Metz. As we passed Pontoy we emerged on the up-

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land plateau lying to the south of Forts Queleu and St. Privat, and before us to the north lay those sulky-looking fortresses which refused to be enlivened even by the rays of the afternoon sun which fell full on their sullen sides. St. Privat was speaking with its great guns, firing in the direction of the Moselle, but close to us lay a German field battery in utter quiescence, sure token that nothing of importance was going on. At dusk we reached Corny, and applied to the Etappen Commandant for quarters. His answer was an imperative suggestion of the same character as that which the Gardes Mobiles made to Mr. Malet on his way from Paris to Meaux. We had no resource but to sleep under the beautiful stars. They were fortunately in our case visible, and we bivouacked not uncomfortably in an orchard outside the town, which was greatly preferable to finding harbour in any of the houses of Corny, infected as they were to the very ceiling with malignant typhus. A visit for purposes of information to the fine old château occupied by Prince Frederick Charles resulted in my being told that the parlementaire which came out a day or two previous had returned into Metz without any definite result, and that it was believed that Metz would now hold out to the bitter end. Further, that there was to be no change in the Prussian tactics. Still "masterly inactivity" was to be the policy, and the intelligence received from Metz of a reliable character was of a nature to indicate that this policy could not possibly, ere long, fail to effect the desired results. Prince Frederick Charles had been suffering seriously from dysentery, and was still far from fully recovered, but he was able to sit his horse, and he had never devolved his functions of commander-in-chief on any substitute.

Corny lies in a trough on the edge of the Moselle

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shut out from even a distant view of Metz by two curious conical hills, which are part of the series of which the hill of Mousson and the range of St. Quentin and Plappeville are also summits. The peak nearest the river and also nearest Metz is known as the Mont St. Blaise. Its elevation is considerable, and its position renders it highly eligible as a look-out station. On its summit there was an observatory, and this observatory I visited on the morning of the 19th, notwithstanding the black looks of those in authority in Corny. The whole hilltop is honeycombed with artificial caves, formed, I suppose, in the old days, when the ruin on the summit was a castle inhabited by some magnate of Lorraine, who from his eyrie here dominated the beautiful plain before him, and the valley of the Moselle. Alongside of this ruin and at an equal elevation, stands a lonely farmhouse, and in front of it the Germans had erected a wooden look-out post, open toward Metz, and mounted with a very powerful telescope. Not a man could move within the scope of vision that the action was not noted by the officer who constantly sat with his eye at this instrument. A series of telegraph wires from the several head-quarters of the different army corps converged into a little office in the rear of this look-out post, and the intentions of the French were thus known as soon as they proceeded to manifest them by action. The post was occupied by two officers belonging to the Second Army Corps—and they had at their disposal a detachment of soldiers to act as orderlies, messengers, &c. What a glorious view opened out before me as I stood on the little plateau in front of the ruin of the Castle of St. Blaise, and looked Metz-ward! On the left lay the narrow valley of the Moselle, with the slope of the vinebergs in front of Gorze rising beyond. At our feet, to the left, lay Ars-sur-Moselle,

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skirted by the railway, with the old Roman aqueduct spanning the Moselle with its antique arches, and the new road-bridge nearer Montigny, where is the junction of the railway lines from Nancy and from Saarbrück. A locomotive was dodging about the junction as I looked down upon it, and right before me stretched the rich and beautiful plain, variegated with green and brown and yellow, according to the tint of the crops and the foliage, and with the great twin tower of the Cathedral of Metz standing up defiantly in its centre. The river wound through the flat in three great stretches: one close under the frowning bulk of Mont St. Quentin, that sulked blackly across at us on the left front; the other twisting in a long half-loop far away to the right. As it seemed immediately under us, Fort St. Privat peeped spitefully out over the poplars surrounding the pretty village and château of Cuvry, and further to my right the grim earth-work front of Fort Queleu showed itself over the plain like a huge beaver-dam. The prospect was vast. Carrying the eye over the spires of the cathedral, I could see to the north of Metz the long link of the Moselle trending eastward toward Olgy and Malroy, and with the powerful telescope in position I could even discern St. Eloy and beyond it the blackened ruins of St. Rémy, Ladonchamps, and Grandes and Petites Tapes, where on the 7th I had seen the Landwehrmen die in their tracks rather than yield the post they held, although bidden thereto by an overwhelming number of enemies. It may be interesting to give the positions of the hostile forces as seen from this summit, since the status quo then visible was unaltered when the capitulation took place.

To begin at the now well-known Mercy-le-Haut. Opposite this point the French were in force in front of Grigy, from which position they, on the previous night,

had burnt the remaining houses of Peltre. Working westward, the French foreposts were in Bevoye, Magny, in front of Montigny, and thence across the Moselle, at Moulins-les-Metz, which had been burnt about a fortnight previously. From Moulins the forepost line ran up toward St. Hubert, between St. Ruffine and Chazelles, hence in front of Scy through the valley close under Mont St. Quentin to Lessy, and thence northward with a slight sweep allowed by Plappeville to Lorry, and thence to Vigneulles and Woippy. The completion of the circle I have already detailed. The German foreposts, commencing from the right, stood at Peltre, and thence westward in front of St. Thiebauldt, and in la Papeterie (opposite Magny). Then there was a sweep comparatively close to Metz, as the Moselle was neared, and the Teuton foreposts stood impudently at Frescaty, whence the sentries must have been able almost to discern the complexions of the gunners in St. Privat. The line crossed the Moselle to Vaux, considerably in front of Ars-sur-Moselle, and then made a dart forward to Jussy, right under the guns of St. Quentin. Longeau, where there was a battery of 12-pounders, continued the chain to Chatel St. Germain. Across the plateau and the wood of Chatel ran the links of the strong forepost chain, giving a wide berth to the big guns of Plappeville, behind Lorry, through the Bois de Vigneulles to Saulny, from Saulny, still further north-east, to Villers-le-Plesnois, and so by Norroy to the bloodstained Ladonchamps, and the villages whose names are known in connection with the combat of the 7th, to the Moselle at Maxe.

So much for the positions of the two hostile armies in this portion of the investiture. A few words now as to the position of the French inside their outposts yet outside the town of Metz, the gates of which were sealed

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to Bazaine's army as rigorously as was the road to liberty. The French had in all, in the environed space and outside Metz, four great lagers or camps. The first and probably the largest was on the slope of Mont St. Quentin, looking toward Mont St. Blaise. I could see the rows of tents athwart and athwart the slope, past the village of Scy, and stretching almost down to Chazelles. Another great camp almost joined the first at Longeville, a village on the west bank of the Moselle, and this lager straggled up the river margin first to Ban St. Martin, where Bazaine had his head-quarters, and so on to the north as far as Devant-les-Ponts. A third camp was in front of St. Julien, toward Vantoux, Vallieres, &c., concerning which detailed information has already been given. The fourth camp was around Borny and Grigy. Besides those camps of soldiers there seemed two great collections of sick, so far as I could discern through the telescope of the observatory. One of those was placed on the esplanade of the town of Metz, and along the river brink. I saw the sick being carried about on stretchers, and the curtains of the tents looped up to give air to the inmates. Another great sick camp seemed to be on the Island of Sauley, where it was believed the cases of typhus fever were as much as possible isolated.

After quitting Corny on the 19th, our way lay across the river by Noveant, the means of transit being a pontoon bridge. Just outside Corny we came on a graveyard, which the Germans had improvised for the bodies of those who had died in the hospitals there, whether from sickness or wounds. They were burying the dead now in deal coffins, but the coffins were put in the ground with very scant ceremony. I saw a fatigue party putting a couple into a hole, the coffins lying on the grass while the men dug their receptacle.

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Gorze was very much changed for the better since the last time I had visited it in the days of blood. From the summit of the great convent on the hill there still was flying the hospital flag; but under it lay few or no wounded men. The hotel was tenanted by the cheery officers of the staff of Prince Louis of Hesse, who commanded the troops lying in the town, consisting of several regiments of Hessian men, with the lion instead of the eagle on their helmets. The inhabitants had all come back to their houses, and lived not alone on amicable, but seemingly on cordial terms with the stalwart Hessians billeted upon them. Madame of the hotel, who in August had moved about in a stolid apathy of despair, utterly disregarding any questions that might be put to her, and with hardly energy enough to wring her hands, was now blithe and sprightly, moving about briskly in response to the requirements of her numerous guests. The stains that blood had made on the floors were still visible—indelible probably while the boarding lasts, but Madame's despair was much more evanescent, and with her return to good spirits the landlady's instinct of charging stiff prices had returned. In August, when I asked her whether I should pay her anything for the quasi shelter I had had for the night under her roof, she only stared blankly in my face, and I could not get an answer from her. Now, when I asked her whether she could give me a bottle of good wine, she eagerly replied in the affirmative, and placed before me a really good bottle of Muscat, for which she put on, with a smiling face, the fancy price of twelve francs.

The road from Gorze to Rezonville consists, first of an ascent through a narrow gorge into a corner of the Bois de Vionville, and then it traverses the plain in a line with the close of the battle of Vionville on the 16th

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of August. On the bleak October forenoon all that we saw in the way of traces of the fights of August were the many graves and occasional heaps of the *débris* of the battle-field. But another sense than that of sight bore testimony to tokens of carnage. Every grave-heap had beside it an eccentric tombstone in the shape of a barrel of chloride of lime; yet, notwithstanding this disinfectant, the taint in the air was unmistakable and indescribably fœtid. In the village of Rezonville were still some of the more severely wounded, and the doctors were heartily glad to see the stores which the English ambulance fourgons contained. At Rezonville the troops were Hessians, belonging to the 7th Army Corps. After a short halt, to enable Mr. Lee to distribute his stores judiciously, we pressed on to Gravelotte, where we were most cordially received by the officers of a battery of artillery quartered there. Afterwards we were permitted to go on to the foreposts in front of Chatel St. Germain, looking over to Fort St. Julien. The chain of sentries stood just where it had done on the morning of the 20th of August, looking down into the intervening valley. The French had a large cavalry forepost in the bottom of the valley. On the slope around the pretty village of Scy lay the white tents of the French camp which I had seen on the previous day from the top of Mont St. Blaise. Walking some half a mile in the direction of the Moselle, we came presently on a promontory that juts out into the valley, and commands a view of the whole country. It seemed that at our very feet lay the huge pile of the Cathedral; the tin on its spires flashing up in a watery ray of the morning sun, and the great mass casting a dark shadow across the Place d'Armes. On the Isle of Sauley we could see the "isolated" crawling about the river's edge, and between the ramparts and the

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great southern camp a locomotive was at work on the railway.

As we walked back from the extreme foreposts we passed many rifle-pits on the crest of the rising ground forming the sentry-line, and also a regularly-constructed battery, with earthworks in front and casemates and magazine in the rear. On the platform were mounted six 12-pounders, and in the rear, near Chatel, were several batteries of field artillery. The 12-pounders looked across at Fort St. Julien in the most impudent manner imaginable, as if to say, "Your fortress exists only on our sufferance; we could blow you to little pieces with a round or two if we chose, but we prefer leaving you alone, out of our tender mercy." And St. Quentin, on its part, seemed to look across at the 12-pounders with something of a risus sardonicus on its grim grey features.

Returning to Gravelotte, we set out for the completion of our design to make the circuit of the Prussian position. Our road lay past the blackened ruins of Malmaison, in which, on the afternoon of the 18th of August, 200 French wounded were burnt, by shells fired from French guns. The smell in the shell, which was all that remained of a once large mansion, was horrible. The tiles had fallen in and hidden the charred corpses of the miserables who perished in the conflagration; but here and there projected a ghastly blackened hand, or a gartered leg swathed in discoloured red cloth. The place was one vast horrrible grave, never to be thought of without a shudder. In a lonely upland valley we came upon the forlorn and ruined hamlet of Champenoise, utterly burnt out, smashed and pounded in all directions with shells, pitted all over with the dents of chassepot bullets, and its precincts full of mounds, below which

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lay, side by side, defenders and captors. Further to the north, in the rear of Amanvilliers, was a twin battery to the one at Gravelotte, very daintily constructed, and fenced round with *chevaux de frise*, and I rather think some pleasant little surprises in the shape of mines. From Amanvilliers the road trended away to the left to avoid the entrenchments in the vicinity of the foreposts at Saulny, and presently reached the village of Jerusalem. Lying in a sequestered and somewhat isolated tract, few students of war literature have heard much about this tiny namesake of the great Hebrew city of antiquity. Nevertheless, it was the scene of a terrible conflict on the evening of the 18th of August. It had its Titus in General von Pape, but there was no Josephus to chronicle the episodes of the fray. Yet as eloquently as any pen could have described them were they indicated now by the silent yet expressive grave-tokens sown thickly all round the little spot, whose ruin was so utter that it might, to complete the parallel with its namesake of old, have been sown with salt.

Quitting the plateau lying to the north-west of Fort Plappeville, we drove through a great wood, chiefly of underbrush, and suddenly came out on a bluff overhanging the valley of the Moselle. Our point was just before Feves, and the view was glorious. Moy before us in the valley, one could easily trace the line of the German foreposts stretching across to the river; nearer to Metz again was the French line, and behind it the white tents of the camps, with columns of troops moving about in the interval. We could see the zig-zags of Fort Moselle, and of the enceinte surrounding the town. At Feves, just below us, and in a splendid position, was a battery of 12-pounders, the same that I had seen speaking to such good purpose on the afternoon of the 7th. Getting

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down into the valley, we crossed the Thionville road, and struck for the temporary wooden barracks erected on the railway to the right front of Maizières, in which was quartered the Fusilier battalion of the 81st Regiment, which had distinguished itself in Ladonchamps on the night of the 7th. In front of the Baracken was another battery of 12-pounders, and on the other side of Maizières, before the Chateau of Amelange, stood yet another. We crossed the river at Hautconcourt, and came down to Charly in the gloaming. Next morning I quitted my good friends of the fourgons, and struck across for my old comrades of the 4th Regiment, whom I found quartered in Château Gras, a little village some half-mile to the north rear of Retonfay.

Among the "kent faces" that greeted me after my absence I missed one or two whom I had learnt to reckon friends. The adjutant of the battalion, a joyous lad fresh from the schools, a youngster of eighteen summers, had succumbed to the hardships of the situation. The marrow was not "set" in the growing boy's bones, and where seasoned men found it not an easy matter to keep sickness from assailing them with success, the dart had penetrated through his green frame, and he had been compelled to go back to the Fatherland, a shattered veteran ere he had attained his full stature. I missed, too, another face, that of a lieutenant, whose determination to consider himself well while as yet the fever had not left him, I had respected in one sense, while in another I had deprecated. Wounded in the fight by Noisseville on the 1st of September, he had been sent back to St. Wendel, where in the lazarette fever had laid hold of him. His wound healed, and the fever in part abated, the soldier lusted to be again with his comrades in the forefront of the battle, and he had

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quitted the lazarette while as yet the dregs of the fever had not been eliminated from his frame. On the day of his arrival he lay beside me on the straw, with the alternate cold and hot fits working their will of him, and then I told him that his return had been premature. My words were made good by the fact that two days after the doctor had peremptorily insisted on his return to St. Wendel, and so he had gained nothing by his enterprise save another strain on his constitution.

A friend had kindly kept for me a little diary of the siege events on this face which had occurred since my retirement to Saarbrück, but they were of so little importance as not to call for reproduction. The only actual sortie made by the French troops, and that in comparatively small numbers, had been on the 16th, in the direction of the Brewery. Of course they were driven back. They could have hoped for nothing else. All the damage they did was to shoot through the chest the Feldwebel of the 6th Company. King Wilhelm had no better non-commissioned officer in all his vast army. Strauss smoked his cigar while the doctor cut the bullet out of his back, the lieutenant beside whom he was shot holding him up while the operation was being performed. Then he quietly squared up his company-book, and counting the money in his hands (the Feldwebel is the pay-sergeant of the company), handed everything over to his successor in right trim, and went away philosophically in the waggon to a lazarette. Deserters had become so numerous as to engender a suspicion that there was a design for depleting the garrison by this device, and so eking out the stores of food. A few deserters are useful, and not to be discouraged. Assume that none of them speak the truth; King David tells us that "all men are liars," and yet from our fellow-men's utterances we con-

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trive to extract some grains of truth. In like manner a little wheat can be winnowed out of the chaff of a deserter's farragos, and one or two are acceptable. But now that their name was legion, the order had been issued to receive no more bodies of deserters into the lines, but to send them back whence they came by the powerful argument of the needle-gun. How was it that so many of the deserters were drunk when they came in? Was strong drink on tap in the outposts round Metz, or were the men dosed for the attempt? The latter hypothesis might seem to be borne out by the fact, of which I was assured, not by French prisoners alone, but by German doctors who had administered to the French wounded, that the French tirailleurs who pushed so boldly to the front at Maizières on the 7th were all full of brandy. Ichabod! Ichabod! How had the glory departed from the French arms when the leaders were compelled to infuse Dutch courage into their soldiers! The French were the readiest to scorn the Russian serf-soldier because, when he came up through the fog wreaths on the morning of Inkermann, his sluggish pulses had been quickened by corn-schnaps. Now, it seemed that they found the same unsoldier-like stimulant requisite in their own case.

I have heard Count Bismarck compared to an elephant's trunk, as one for whom nothing was too great or too small. But Bismarck was not the only German in this war who looked after all little matters as well as the great. I was much amused by an item in one of the orders of the day from Prince Frederick Charles's head-quarters. It was to the effect that whereas an unprincipled rascal of a Hamburg cigar merchant had been selling boxes of cigars to the troops, the upper tier of which consisted of good weeds while the lower ones

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were unmitigated trash, the military authorities of any place where this astute gentleman should present himself, were enjoined to lay hold of him and transmit him to the head-quarters at Corny. At such an entry one may smile, but I defy him to refrain from respecting the all-pervading care and watchfulness which took cognisance of such a matter as this. In such care and watchfulness lay the root of much of the Prussian success. A campaign is not made victorious by dint of fighting alone; success more than half depends on efficient organisation, even as regards seeming trifles.

Château Gras must have been a beautiful village before the tide of war came and strewed sand and shingle over its charms. A fine old château is the principal building in it, the noble garden of which had been very little injured, while the furniture had also suffered very little. In a room on the ground floor the books still stood on the long ranges of shelves upon the wall. So careful were the Germans to prevent injury to property that on the door of every room occupied by them was pasted an inventory of its contents, for which the successive occupants were held responsible, just as in a barrack at home. The château till lately had been a large Feldlazarette, occupied by the wounded of the fights before Noisseville of the 31st of August and 1st of September. The smell of the chloride of lime was still so powerful in the beautiful rooms that some of the officers preferred more modest quarters in the houses of the village. When the owner of the château came back he must have shuddered at the legacy the war had left him. Of the wounded in the great lazarette, not a few had succumbed before the grim king of terrors. In a quiet corner of the garden, looking out through the trees on to St. Julien, St. Quentin, les Bottes, and the

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great towers of the cathedral in the centre of the plain, is a graveyard, where lie those who died of their wounds in the lazarette. It is prettily enclosed with a wooden paling. The one great grave, over 100 yards in length, is banked up with green sods, and the surface trimly raked. It is flanked up by a great wooden cross bearing the simple inscription:—"Hier ruhen 285 Preussische und 5 Französische tapfere Krieger." There are besides several graves of officers, which are adorned with box-wood crosses planted in the soil and with wreaths of immortelles.

By the 25th of October the symptoms grew more and more pronounced of a speedy ending to the siege, apart altogether from the accounts of negociations which we had from line to head-quarters. On the night of the 24th I had a conversation with a deserter whose information seemed of considerable exactitude and apparent truthfulness. He spoke of a rapid and continuous diminution in the rations served out to the troops, and of increasing irregularity in the supply. Eight days back the bread ration had been half a pound a day for each man; now it was reduced to four ounces, and there was difficulty in procuring this morsel. The man understood that the Imperial Guards who lay around Bazaine at Ban St. Martin, received rather more food than the other troops, and they were used by reason of their superior discipline and their greater contentment as a means of keeping in some semblance of order the line regiments. To each peloton a live horse was given per day, but the man described the brutes as consisting of little else than bones and hide. There can be little wonder that the number of sick was greatly on the increase under such circumstances. Out of 800 men of

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which this man's battalion consisted, 200 were sick and unfit for duty. Those who were nominally able men were, he said, in a state of great weakness, and certainly his own appearance corroborated this statement.

Various statements appeared to have been made within the last day or two by the French generals to their troops, to keep them from falling into utter despondency. Another deserter brought out a cock and bull story about a general order, to the effect that the Empress was to arrive in Metz on the 25th, and to assume the supreme power, and that then on the next day the whole army was to march away to the north by permission of the Germans. The authorities seemed to interpret these and kindred statements as giving intimation of a sortie in force towards the north on the 26th. The line to the north of Metz on both sides of the river was accordingly greatly strengthened, and the troops in the third line all round were called out at five o'clock in the morning of that day, in positions enabling them to act efficiently as reserves and supports for the first and second lines. These precautions were no doubt wise, yet on the face of things it seemed that a sortie was physically impossible. It had rained with hardly any intermission for three days, and was still raining. Except where the macadam of the chaussées afforded a hard bottom under the mud, it was impossible to traverse the country on foot. One floundered helplessly in the slippery stuff till he got to a deeper place than usual, and then had to struggle vehemently to prevent himself from sticking outright. No regiment could have kept its formation in ground so holding; and to move artillery or train, except on the macadamised roads, must have been utterly impossible. Following the caution of the Germans, I rode round early to Malroy to be on the ground, if any-

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thing, contrary to my belief, should take place; but the alarm, as I had anticipated, turned out to be false.

The 26th October was a great day with us in Château-Gras. Metz had not quite capitulated. There had been no sortie. The rain was coming down unceasingly, and the country was one huge slush. But nevertheless, I repeat, it was a great day with us. It was our doctor's birthday, and there was no reason why we should not keep it, while the generals were finishing the more serious business. Our doctor was a man unknown to fame, but he deserved it more than many a man who has earned it. He was of the fighting jolly style of medico; although his business was to cure wounds, he had no objection, but the contrary, to cut out work for himself. If you had met him in Cork, you would unhesitatingly have set him down as a native, with his merry black eyes, wide laughing mouth, and—how shall I put it delicately?—his nose with the Hibernian bend. And it was the birthday of this excellent fellow.

I could not make out in the morning why *appel* was hurried over so rapidly; but I was soon to learn. The adjutant tucked my arm under his, and marched me off into the château. Of the *salle* the officers had made a mess-room, and it was into this fine apartment that the adjutant guided me about ten o'clock in the morning. We were one and all, it seemed, the guests of the doctor on this the anniversary of his natal morn. Nor was the doctor hospitable without the means. A certain good lady, calling him husband, and dwelling in Königsberg, had not forgotten the day, and, as a birthday present, had sent her good man a great chest. The sum total of the contents of that chest, the world through me can never know. The enumeration I heard indeed, but I lost the tally when the doctor was about half through

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with it. Suffice it to say that the table groaned under a load of delicacies. I had seen a telegram from Berlin, to the effect that the troops before Metz were living on mutton. The telegraphist would have opened his eyes had he dropped in this morning. There was Schinken and boiled ham, there was a German sausage, as big as the good heart of the doctor's wife, there was a snug little barrel of sardellen, pickled with bay leaves; there was German gingerbread and rusks; there was fresh butter, and there was compot of plums, and I don't know what all else. Then, for drink, there was the choice of Malaga and claret, rum, brandy, Hamburg bitters, and absinthe, and a hearty welcome to season all. We had a curious way of eating in the foreposts, what may be styled, a miscellaneous manner of feeding. Sausage, gingerbread, sardines, and compot, were seen on one plate at once, and served to season one another in a very impartial way. I don't think the doctor could reasonably have complained of the appetites which were brought to his feast. He had one appetite of which he could have had no anticipation. Just as we were in the middle of the feast, a miserable devil of a French deserter was brought in from the foreposts. I never before saw the wolfish glare of absolute hunger darting from a man's eyes. Wet, dirty, half-rotten, seemingly from scurvy, with puffed lips, and hollow cheeks, this gaunt spectacle of a man devoured the food with his great staring eyes. He could not reply to any questions, so concentrated was he upon his gaze at the meaty ham-bone, and when the Hauptmann threw it to him, it positively made one shudder to see the dog-like style in which he fell a-worrying of it. When all, including, I hope, the poor wretch in the lobby, had eaten their fill, the senior Hauptmann called for full glasses, and in a

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neat speech proposed the doctor's health. The doctor was very waggish in his reply. He suggested we should dedicate a bumper to St. Julien and les Bottes, because they had been courteous enough not to intervene to the detriment of the crockeryware, and expressed, further, a fervent wish that Bazaine were making one of the company. By twelve o'clock the doctor was drunk out—that is, his stores were—but a happy thought struck a lieutenant concerning a barrel of beer which he had in his room. This was fetched, and its contents went the way of the doctor's stores.

As we broke up, I heard the word go round that there would be a "picnic" in the evening. One is apt to associate the idea of a picnic with leafy glades, blue muslin, bad champagne, and lobster salad. None of these *agrêments* had we in Château Gras. The rain was falling fast, the winter wind was blowing bitterly, and the idea of a picnic seemed about as wild as would have been the suggestion of an oratory. But nevertheless the "picnic" came off, although not quite according to my preconceived notions of this institution. It was an indoor picnic; in point of fact, it took place in the hall where the doctor gave his breakfast. It was on the mutual co-operation principle—everybody was expected to bring something. My contribution was a box of sardines, a lump of butter, and a bottle of rum. I am afraid this was not quite up to the general mark; but what I had I gave—I could no more. I stood in the lobby awhile, watching the arrivals and their several contributions. One Hauptmann was accompanied by his servant carrying half-a-dozen of red wine, a lieutenant had a leg of mutton and a bag full of sugar under his cloak. The hall looked quite civilised. On the great round table in the centre stood an actual moderator lamp,

with a painted shade atop of it, its pedestal resting on a mat. Talk of war times, here was a refinement with a vengeance. A great wood fire blazed cheerfully on the hearth, and the glasses—somewhat nondescript in shape and size, it is true—sparkled on the board. After a brief pause, the first service of tipple was brought in, contained in a white soup tureen and an antique china vase. The drink was very good. I regret being unable to furnish the recipe for its composition. I may state, however, that among the ingredients were red wine, white wine, rum, cognac, schnapps, cloves, and cinnamon; of the proportions of each I could learn nothing. I incline to the opinion that a "stock" pot with the red wine was put on, and, as contributions came in, that they were emptied into the pot promiscuously.

For about two hours conversation, alternated with story-telling, was the order of the evening. The talk fell once upon the causes of the French defeats, and after various explanations had been started, a sententious premier lieutenant, who had not previously opened his mouth, struck in with this original illustration and very sound theory:—"The chief rabbi of the Dantzic Jews had taken a new house, and his flock determined to stock his wine butt for him. An evening was set apart for the affair, and one after another the Jews went down into the cellar, and emptied each his bottle into the big vat. When the rabbi came next day to draw off his dinner wine, he found there was nothing in the cask but water. Each and every Jew had said to himself, that one bottle of water could never be noticed in so great a quantity of wine, and all acting up to this, the rabbi had not got a drop of wine in his butt. Now it was just the same with the French army. One soldier said to himself that it would not matter a copper if he sneaked away—

in so great a multitude he would not be missed. But the devil of it was, that one and all took this line of reasoning, and the result was that nobody was left to look our battalions in the face." Everybody laughed at the premier lieutenant's quaint illustration, and then we had a stand-up supper at the sideboard. That finished, singing was the order of the evening. It surprised me not a little when one of the officers struck up "My heart's in the Highlands," and almost all were able to chime, not alone with the tune, but the words. The doctor treated us to a composition of his own, composed to illustrate passing events, for the burden of it was—"The Bois de Grimont oh!" The Bois de Grimont was the wood out of which the French sharp-shooters so persistently peppered away at our foreposts. Encouraged by the success of this effort, he gave us another song *pour l'occasion*, the chorus of which mixed up "Mercy-le-Haut," and "Der Teufel," in some mysterious manner. It may interest the British music-hall patrons to know that a translation of "The Captain with the whiskers" is one of the chiefest favourites with the German officers. They rattle away at its lively chorus with great delight. We had it to-night over and over again. At ten o'clock the "stock" pot being empty, we broke up with great joviality, and betook ourselves each unto his respective straw.

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CHAPTER II.

Pucella Rapta.

AFTER all our long waiting from day to day in anticipation of the capitulation of Metz, that event came upon us with a strange suddenness. It had only been a few days previously that it was mentioned in the general orders from head-quarters that the negotiations had been definitively broken off; and when men heard this they set their teeth hard, and prepared for another spell of waiting, variegated with fighting. But there had been symptoms of the end being imminent in the haggard deserters who came among us from day to day, with their longing looks at our black bread and flesh. Orders had been issued to the railway people in Saarbrück to have material in readiness for repairing the railway communication direct into Metz; and this was another symptom. But still, when the report ran round the regiment, on the afternoon of the 27th, that the capitulation had actually been negotiated, some found it difficult to realise the fact—confirmation was wanting. It was true that the day before the generals commanding the several army corps had been summoned to Frescaty by an order of Prince Frederick Charles, and that some of us had the "straight tip" under promise of the profoundest secrecy; but everything looked so much in the ordinary way, that people could not realise the fact of the capitulation. Men went on the field watch as usual, and the confronting foreposts still continued to exchange shots. No white flag was visible, and the unbelieving Thomases of the 4th shrugged their shoulders, and would have none of the tidings. But general orders are convincing argu-

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ments, and even the unbelieving Thomases took to clapping their hands and capering, when the news came under the sign manual of the chief of the staff.

At twelve o'clock on the forenoon of the 28th each of the outlying fortresses was taken possession of by two battalions of German infantry, a squadron of cavalry, one heavy battery without tumbrils, 100 artillerymen with the complement of officers, and an engineer detachment. The following is the apportionment of the force of occupation. The troops occupying

St. Quentin	were found by		18th Infantry Division.
Plappeville	,,	,,	3rd Army Corps.
St. Julien	,,	,,	1st Army Corps.
Queleu	,,	,,	8th Army Corps.
St. Privat	,,	,,	Hessian Division.

At the same hour a battalion of the 7th Army Corps marched forward, and took possession of the Porte Serpenoise, one of the gates of Metz, and another battalion from the same corps occupied the Porte Moselle. Two hours before the occupation of the forts, I should observe, there were sent forward from each of the occupying detachments an artillery officer and a small body of under officers, accompanied by engineers, to take over the powder magazines and the respective forts, and they sent out the report to the effect that all was in order before the troops were allowed to march in. This precaution was no doubt dictated by a recollection of the catastrophe at Laon.

It was in orders that at one o'clock on the 28th the French army should formally lay down its arms. By reason of the confusion which reigned everywhere this disarmament was protracted and piecemeal, a large proportion of the force not disburdening themselves of the

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now useless arms till the following morning. There was no set ceremony, yet the affair was imposing from its very simplicity. It was conducted in detail, each corps laying down its arms in the neighbourhood of its own station. I saw several regiments of the 3rd Corps d'Armée — that of Lebœuf — disarm themselves. In straggling masses the men defiled past, piling their arms in great heaps at the word of command from their own officers, who laid down their swords as the men did their chassepots, building quite a little heap of them to the right of the great stacks of rifles. The disarmed French troops then returned into their bivouacs, which they occupied for one night more, before quitting for other bivouacs round which should stand German sentries. For this last night they preserved a semblance of freedom. The Germans left them to themselves. Except in the forts and at the two gates I have mentioned, not a spiked helmet was to be seen nearer Metz than had been seen a week before. The *Feldwachen* were mounted as usual, the *replis* were established, and the troops stood fast as ever in their long and weary watch around Metz. Indeed, in the course of the night there was a slight skirmish somewhere between Vautoux and Mey, conducted on their own account, as I afterwards learned, by a few men who thought proper to repudiate the capitulation. So late as when I passed Little Belle Croix on the forenoon of the 29th, I heard a few dropping shots on the slope to the right, but whether they were fired in anger I never was able to learn.

On the morning of the 29th October—sombre day for the French arms—the Frenchmen came forth and rendered themselves to their captors—corps by corps, and under the command of their own officers. The 6th Corps (Canrobert's) came from its bivouac by Woippy to

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Ladonchamps, where on the 7th so many of its members had stained the soil with their blood. Their prison-bivouac was on the plain in the rear of the wrecked and burnt village. The 7th Corps, that of Ladmirault, came out over the ridge between St. Quentin and Plappeville, and found quarters, inhospitable enough I fear, on the bleak plateau of St. Maurice. The Imperial Guard marched down to Longeville, crossed the railway bridge at Tournebride, passed on to Frescaty to the left, and found their bivouac in the plain between Orly and Augny. The garrison of Metz itself, consisting of about 20,000 men, chiefly of Mobile Guards, marched by Le Sablon, past the ruined village of Magny, and so forward to the outskirts of St. Thiebauldt. The 2nd Corps (Frossard's), with Laveauconfied's division, and the 4th brigade came out past La Posette on the great Strasburg chaussée, and found their bivouac behind the village of Ars Laquenexy. The 3rd Corps (that of Lebœuf) came out among us of the 1st German Army Corps along the chaussée leading to Saarlouis.

Each corps, as it marched out, was received by the German troops covering the respective section of the environment. They were led by their own officers, who formally handed over their men to the German officers, and then they were at liberty to quit their ranks and return to Metz, there to wait the trains which should convey them into captivity across the German Rhine. It should be mentioned that their parole was accepted from none of the officers of the army of Metz, a stringency adopted in consequence of the numerous defaults of honour perpetrated by officers released on parole after having been made prisoners. The men under the command of their under-officers were then marched out to the bivouac places, which had previously been partly

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prepared, wood for fires having been collected and a supply of provisions being ready for distribution.

I was with the 1st Army Corps when it took up its position to receive the corps of Lebœuf. From all the villages around, the villages inhabited for so many weary weeks, the villages made memorable by fights, by burnings, by graves, by sickness, and by deaths, streamed the regiments on to the chaussée. There had been much rain during the night, and although the sun broke out about ten o'clock, the watery haze hung about the bottoms of the valleys and the mud splashed as the troops strode through it. Mud! why we had had nothing but mud for weeks, and should we mind it now, looking at the errand on which we are bound? No. The "Wacht am Rhein" rises lustily from the pioneers in the front, and the regiments as they come down the side roads catch up the strain. On we go past the Brewery, with the grenade pits, the graves, and the entrenchments around it—itself a mere heap of shattered bricks—on to the gentle slope behind the village of Lauvallière. Then right and left wheeled the heavy columns, leaving the chaussée open, and a parallelogram of about 100 feet in width on each side of it. In front of the Brewery stood the artillery, before the artillery the serried ranks of brass-spiked helmets all the way down the gentle slope, almost to Lauvallière. Arms were piled, and there the Germans waited for the advent of the men with which it almost seemed, through the length of time that the armies had confronted each other, that they could claim a kind of personal acquaintance. While the troops waited I pushed forward towards Metz to meet the Frenchmen. Already, it is true, we had plenty of Frenchmen, but they were all civilians, and there were Frenchwomen too, and French children. The road had been opened in the morning,

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and they came crowding out, the poor creatures who had abandoned their village homes and crowded into the town when the pennons of the Uhlans had shown themselves on the fringes of the villages. On they came, waggon load after waggon load, with their trumpery household goods and their agricultural implements piled on the waggons behind the women and children. They knew not what it was that they had come out for to see. Perhaps they expected to find their cottage homes as they had left them—not roofless, wrecked, utterly ruined, as was the grim reality. Lauvallière seemed to give the first shock to their cheerfulness. Gaunt and grim stood its houses, burnt to the shell, the graves lying all around, the holes in the fields where the shells had burst, the breastworks behind which had stood the German foreposts. As each waggon and each knot of peasants came into Lauvallière there was a halt, and full many a "Mon Dieu!" In Lauvallière there was a large tannery, which must have employed many workmen, and been an important and profitable concern. It was now a mere shell —not a fragment of the woodwork is left. I chanced upon its owner standing on the bluff over against his property, and gazing upon it in moody silence. Twenty paces farther on I came on a little group, the extreme pathos of which made my heart swell. It was a family, and they sat in front of what had once been their home. That home was now roofless. The stones of the walls were all that was left. The garden was a wreck, and the whole scene was concentrated desolation. The husband leant against the wall, his arms folded, and his head on his chest. The wife sat on the wet ground, weeping over the babe at her breast. Two elder children stared around them with wonder and unconcern—too young to realise the misfortune which had overtaken all the family.

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The silence of the grief-stricken group was more eloquent than any words. No home, no food, a waggon, and a couple of starved horses, a field with four graves in it. This is the brief summary of the belongings and condition of the family. All were alike; although this family was the one I happened to see, because their home lay on my road in Lauvallière, some similar piteous sight must soon have been visible by every house in every village all around Metz. What need for me to occupy space by writing of what every one with a grain of human sympathy in his composition can picture and mourn for himself?

The stream of *émigrés* continued as I came up the slope on to the flat, on the edge of which lay the improvised fortification of the village of Belle Croix. Belle Croix was ghastly in its utter solitude. Burnt and shattered by German shells, it must nevertheless have been a very strong position. All round the entrenchment across the road, was a moat of some depth. The angles were stockaded, the walls loopholed, and there still stood in position a couple of field guns, which, as the Germans had known to their cost many a time, were located with great skill. Owing to the block caused by the entrenchment the road had been diverted. It had been little enough used before this morning. The grass grew thickly on the chaussée between Lauvallière and Belle Croix. As the peasant waggons came crowding out, they stuck in the heavy mire of this détour, and many were the *sacrés* before they were started again, the lean horses being too weak to pull them through the heavy ground. When I had passed Belle Croix I could not help owning to myself that I had never till then succeeded in forming a proper conception of the real strength of the natural position of Metz. On the right, with a valley intervening

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like a deep trench, lay the blunt-topped mountain, crowned by Fort St. Julien. On its slope were the bivouac fires of the troops of Lebœuf. Nothing could venture on this slope—a great natural glacis—so long as Fort St. Julien thought proper to forbid the passage. On my left, also on an eminence, although from the positions whence I had previously seen it, it appeared to be on a flat, lay Fort Queleu, square and massive, dominating the plateau to the left of the chaussée. But this plateau is closed in Metz-ward by a fortification all to itself—the great earthwork of les Bottes, whose grenades had so often burst in disagreeable proximity, and which now stood solitary and empty, with not even a sentry on its earthen summit. Over the top of Fort les Bottes were visible the towers of the cathedral, and the picture was framed in by the background of that great elevated ridge of which the two chief peaks are crowned by Forts St. Quentin and Plappeville.

It was just beyond les Bottes that I met the first French soldier—a cavalryman of the line. The fellow was as drunk as he well could be to be able to move at all. He staggered forward in tacks, dropping his kit piecemeal as he came. At a bend in the road behind Four-à-Chaux, I came upon the head of the prisoner column, marching onward to their reception at the Brewery. The men were in a very miserable state, covered with mud, wet, sodden seemingly, indeed, through and through with wet, many of their faces blotched and scabbed with scurvy, and quite one-third in a state of drunkenness. Not a few were in a state of bestial drunkenness, their clothes disarranged, and decency utterly disregarded. A little farther on, and right and left, lay the great bivouac before Fort Belle Croix. The troops were being collected by their officers in pelotons

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previously to being marched out, and several columns were already converging on the great chaussée. As each body got the order to go forward a cheer came from the slovenly and dislocated ranks, and from the columns on the march there broke out at intervals a fitful chorus of some lively marching song. Most of the officers were grave, taciturn, and downcast. Surely they must have despised the reckless throng which they nominally commanded. The men obeyed their officers and regarded the sound of the bugle after a fashion, but it was evident that they were utterly unaffected by the catastrophe which had befallen the arms of their country, and were eager only to get somewhere where a full meal of victuals awaited them. Poor wretches, after all it is not fair to be too severe on their disorganisation. How near actual starvation they had come to before their leader would give up the game, their faces pale through the dirt of days, their lean frames with the rags hanging about them, told far more powerfully than protestations, and were the most convincing reply to the easy untruths of those who would have had Europe believe that Metz was betrayed.

Passing the columns of prisoners at a canter, I was back again before the Brewery ere the front of that column had reached the place where stood the Germans waiting for them. The dismounted cavalry came first, followed by the artillery; last of all came the infantry of the line. The cavalry seemed to have lost all self-respect; they greeted the Germans with cheering, and several men broke from the ranks and slouched forward through the mud with intent to salute with a spirituous kiss the German officers standing in front of their companies. It was curious to notice the opposite idiosyncrasies of the two nationalities. Grave and stern stood the German victors, with, as it seemed, a silent pity

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rather than contempt for the demented tatterdemalions who proffered them the undesirable greeting; while the Frenchmen chattered and gesticulated, "sacréd" and spluttered, sang and laughed, as they slouched through the gauntlet of humiliation. The officers quitted their commands as each reached the alley fringed by the German battalions, and returned to Metz or the vicinity. The prisoners, comprising the whole of the 3rd Corps, till the day before under the command of Lebœuf, and numbering about 23,000 men, were escorted to a position between Château Gras and Retonfay, where was fixed the site for their bivouac. The guards for the French prisoners were contributed in rotation by the several divisions. The daily quota for the bivouac at Château Gras was four battalions of infantry, one battery of artillery, and one squadron of cavalry. In command of it had been placed Colonel von Tietzen Hennig, of the 4th regiment, his adjutant being Lieutenant von Verzin. Food had been collected for the supply of the prisoners, who had, of course, to bivouac in the open air. From the 30th daily drafts, each 3000 strong, were despatched toward Germany *viâ* Saarbrück and Saarlouis. In all the capture consisted of 173,000 men, including three marshals, forty-seven general officers, and 6000 regimental officers. General Kummer, the general in chief command of the Landwehr, was appointed interim Commandant of Metz. General von Zastrow took the control of all arrangements connected with the transport of the prisoners and the quartermastership generally of the district around Metz and as far as Thionville. The German troops which had formed the besieging army were not, it was arranged, to enter the town, except when marching through. Metz was, with the forts, in the meantime, to be garrisoned by the Division Kummer and the 7th Army

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Corps. The circle of environment was, however, greatly reduced in size from the day after the surrender. The 2nd Army Corps drew inward to Montigny. The 8th came on to Magny, the 10th to Woippy. The 18th infantry division, charged with the custody of the Imperial Guard, lay now at Longeville, Moulins les Metz, St. Ruffine, and Longeau. The 1st Army Corps came forward closer under the wing of St. Julien. The foreposts were still to be maintained, the chain of communications being kept up just as in the old days. It was anticipated that by seven days all the prisoners would have been sent away.

After I had seen Lebœuf's command taken over by the 1st Army Corps, I returned towards Metz, meeting on my way a stream of straggling soldiers who had missed their corps, and were staggering out under loads of tents, blankets, and what not. The environs of the town were very desolate and very filthy. Mud, raw horseflesh, burnt-out bivouac fires, huts made of the branches of trees, old women, and skeleton horses, were the leading characteristics. There was no difficulty in getting into the town, where I found the shops all open, but with no great show of edibles. Meat hung in the butchers' shops, although it was chiefly, if not altogether, horse; the cafés were crowded, and there appeared no exhaustion in the stocks of the shops devoted to the sale of any material. Tobacco was plentiful, wine, spirits, and liqueurs in great abundance. Making my way to the Hôtel de l'Europe, I found it crowded with French officers, and I also found there one Englishman, Dr. Ward, of the International Society for the Succour of the Wounded, who had just been decorated by the French military authorities for his attention to the wounded; and two Americans, Dr. Good, of the same society, and who had

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also been decorated; and Mr. Eustis, a commercial gentleman, who had spent forty-eight days of the siege in prison under suspicion of being a spy. The spy mania had raged very strongly in Metz. Seventy-eight persons were arrested on suspicion in one day. Eight in all I was told had been shot as convicted spies, including the notorious Shieull, to whose adroitness and accurate information the French believe von Moltke was indebted for his knowledge of the weakness of the French dispositions on the frontier, and for the hint which he utilised into the successes at Wörth and Weissenburg. The following is a statement of the tariff of prices for food ruling in Metz three days before the capitulation, supplied by the manager of the Hôtel de l'Europe:

Beef	8 francs per lb.
Horseflesh	10 centimes to 2 franc per lb.; "choice horse," the tender loin, fetches the latter price.
Eggs	1 franc each; have been 1 f. 20 c.
Fowls	20 francs each.
Pike (fish)	8 francs per lb.
Coffee	6 francs per lb.
Ham	8 francs per lb.
Cheese	40 francs per lb. (nominal, all done.)
Salt	5 francs per lb.
Geese, fat	65 francs per pair paid yesterday.
Oats	120 francs per sack of 200lb.
Chocolate	5 francs per lb.
Bread	White, none since 16th October; brown, 4½ sous per lb.
Mutton	None for two months.
Wine	Plentiful, and old prices maintained; bottle of champagne for 7 francs.

Notwithstanding these extraordinary prices, the tariff in the Hôtel de l'Europe was much the same as usual. I dined there in the evening at the *table d'hôte* for seven francs, including half a bottle of wine. Breakfast was *à la carte*, about seven francs; bottle of champagne, seven francs. We had four courses for dinner, the waiter said none were horseflesh, and it is not seemly to call even

a waiter a liar. The room was crowded with French officers. I dined at the same table with Colonel Michel Ney, a nephew of the historical Marshal. He had received some half-dozen sabre-wounds in the cavalry fight at Vionville, and was only half recovered. At the same table also sat General Duplessis, a French officer of distinction, who also had been severely wounded. In the evening there was a tremendous rush of German officers into the hotel, and quarters became impossible at any price. Forty officers were sent bedless away from the Hôtel de l'Europe, and I was indebted to a good-hearted American for half his bed. The French and German officers fraternised a little in the *salle* after dinner. At first the Frenchmen were a little inclined to be sulky and reserved, but the heartiness of the Germans soon thawed the ice, and the champagne promoted the flow of kindly feeling. I was told that in the forenoon, when the officers of the Imperial Guard said adieu to their men, profuse tears were shed by both. There was no such emotion manifested by Leboeuf's corps.

In the afternoon of the 28th, when the news of the capitulation was made known, there had been a sort of revolutionary riot in Metz. The National Guards made a display of refusing to give up their arms, ran to the Place d'Armes, where they congregated in large numbers and several shots were fired. The cathedral rang the alarm bell and the shops put their shutters up. The editor of one of the ultra journals was the ring-leader; mounted on a white horse, with a pistol in his hand, and others in his belt, he hounded on the mob to yell for Bazaine's blood. That distinguished person, however, with great discretion, remained in his quarters in Ban St. Martin. The mob, composed in a large proportion of civilians, laid hold of an officer of the Imperial Guard,

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and holding pistols at his head, forced him to carry in the front the Republican flag. A hint from the mayor that the Germans would be sent for to put down the disturbance had its effect after the gamins had roared themselves hoarse shouting "Vive la République!"

It seemed it had not been until ten days before the capitulation that the troops of Bazaine's army were forbidden to enter the town of Metz. Up till then they had circulated freely in the town, using the cafés, and spending their money in the shops. Until six days before it, a ration of bread of 100 grammes had been issued to each soldier. Since then they had had no rations, except horseflesh. The townspeople had been on bread rations as well as the troops, the rations consisting of 200 grammes of brown bread. Those who were able paid for their ration, the poor receiving it gratuitously. It surprised me that Metz had been able to hold out so long. The place had not above 50,000 inhabitants, if so many, and with no previous warning it had supported for seventy days a gross population of 230,000 mouths. These are the official figures. The dearness of provisions had been progressive. For instance, on the 16th of August butter had already reached the fancy price of 4f. per pound. On the same day chickens ranged from 6f. to 8f. At the date of the capitulation, butter could not be procured at any price, and the same might be said of chickens. Metz had certainly not capitulated for want of munitions of war. The fortress had ample supplies still left. Although Metz was an arsenal, no manufacture of cannon or projectiles had gone on during the siege. There had been no occasion for any such work, and if there had, the want of coals would have presented an insuperable obstacle. Powder had, however, been made in large quantities. All the coal used in Metz comes from Saar-

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brück, and there had recently been great scarcity—so much so that an order had been issued a week before the capitulation that the gas in the town should be extinguished at seven o'clock, under a heavy penalty. Candles were plentiful, and the deprivation was therefore not so seriously felt.

Of sick there were altogether, in and around Metz, on the date of the capitulation, about 20,000 soldiers, of which about 9000 were wounded men. The latter had chiefly been wounded in the sorties. Of the wounded in the battles of Courcelles and Gravelotte most were either recovered or dead. Very many mutilated men were to be seen in the streets. Latterly almost every operation had ended fatally. Pyæmia, hospital gangrene, and typhus had their sway on frames previously debilitated by hardship and famine. Of hospital stores the greatest lack was in the matter of leeches. For two of these Dr. Ward had on the previous day paid 180 francs. His colleague was down with brain fever, and he paid this wildly fancy price to save his life.

Three or four newspapers continued to be daily printed in Metz up to the capitulation. Since no outside information had reached the town for so long, the newspapers had chiefly concerned themselves with local gossip, hopes, fears, and canards. A file of one of them was a curious sight. The stock of paper had long run out, and the journals had been printed one day on red paper, another on blue, a third on buff, and so on—advertisement placard paper having necessarily been had resort to. The last issue of one journal was printed on brown packing paper.

All the afternoon of the 29th, the division of General Kummer came pouring into the town, with bands playing and colours flying. The great Landwehrmen stared

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around them with undisguised curiosity at the nut which they have found so hard to crack. The townsfolk jabbered among themselves as the troops defiled, and there were not a few scowling faces. What cared the Landwehrmen for the scowling faces? From the slush and mire of Maizières and Ladonchamps they had come into a reasonable prospect of beds and bottles of wine. They were quartered for the most part in the Caserne du Génie, the Hôtel de Ville, and other public buildings. The officers were in private houses. Ye gods! with what zest did they devote themselves to champagne in the *salle* of the hotel! Generals, lieutenants, Vicefeldwebels, all in the lump were there, and one and all speaking after the German manner, at the top of their voices—the din was deafening. The French officers cleared off early to bed, all save two, who sat on moodily in a corner, pulling their moustaches and drinking absinthe—the poison that has sapped the virility of the French army.

Some officious patriots had made themselves busy during the night of the 28th, with the statue of Marshal Fabert in the Place d'Armes. When capitulation was first mooted, a wreath of immortelles and laurel was woven round his head, and a flag stuck in his hand. On the morning of the 29th, the Marshal appeared draped in a full suit of crape, with a hole in it, through which was visible the inscription—the words which the gallant Marshal addressed to Louis XIV:

> Si pour empêcher qu'une place
> que le Roi m'a confiée
> ne tombât au pouvoir de l'ennemi,
> il fallait mettre à la brêche
> ma personne, ma famille et tout mon bien,
> je ne balancerais pas un moment à le faire.

Bazaine had not quite the grit in him to act up to the programme chalked out by the staunch old Marshal.

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Two or three days elapsed after the surrender of Metz before a regular and reasonably quick postal service was established from the city, and for any one to whom time was an object it was necessary to despatch letters from Courcelles, the interim terminus of the railway. To reach this point I quitted Metz early on the morning of the 30th October, compelled to wriggle now right, now left, to circumvent the numerous entrenchments still blocking up the main roads.

On my way from Colombey to Courcelles my track lay through the prisoner-bivouac of the 2nd French Army Corps (Frossard's). It was a very miserable scene. The fires of the previous night had burnt out, and the morning fires had not been lit. The miserable prisoners lounged about in seeming utter despair, the fine rain wetting them through and through, and keeping soft the mud with which their coats were plastered. Some few had erected tents, but the great mass had spent the night in the open standing round the fires, for to lie down must have been impracticable. I saw a couple of corpses lying in the ditch by the roadside, and was told that six or eight poor wretches had succumbed to exhaustion and exposure during the bitter night. If it was any consolation to the prisoners, their German guards were in as miserable a plight as their captives. The chain of sentries posted all round slouched backward and forward on their posts, and the fixed corporalschafts leaned gloomily on their weapons. In the road in front of Ars Laquenexy a kind of market had been established, but the dealers had hardly waked up under the tilts of the carts. They were marketenders chiefly from the German frontier about Saarlouis, and the bulk of their wares consisted of spirituous liquor. The French prisoners were by no means short of money. All the cash in the bank and military

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chest in Metz had been disbursed in paying up the troops' arrears of pay, and there were plenty of francs in their pockets.

In Courcelles I saw the arrival of the first column of prisoners to be sent down by the train to Saarbrück. There were 2000 of them, and five trains, each containing the same number, were being despatched every day. Poor fellows, they seemed very miserable, but they bore their misery with a fortitude which filled me with respect. The rain poured down upon them in a deluge as they stood in the road, which was a foot deep in mud, of the consistency of pea-soup. Here they had to wait for about an hour, while the arrangements for their transit were being completed, and it was good to see the courtesy and quiet fortitude which they manifested. I went among them in the mud. Everywhere the poor fellows stepped aside with a half bow to let me pass. If one accidentally jostled me, the "Pardon, Monsieur," was prompt and warm. I found these French prisoners here as ignorant as those whom I had seen at Sedan. Some of the sergeants asked me for news of the outer world, but the men seemed chiefly concerned to know whither they were going, and what kind of country Germany was. I named several towns as among their probable destination, leading cities of Germany, but very few had more than heard of them, and knew nothing either of their magnitude or of their locality. At last the prisoner-train was ready, some sixty carriages packed as closely as the men could sit or stand. Several open trucks had been brought into requisition, and it seemed to me as though the men were actually stacked upon them, so thickly were they packed. With a whistle the heavy train sluggishly set itself in motion, and away it rolled with its freight of Frenchmen down what was once one of the most charm-

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ing valleys in France. The Frenchmen were prisoners on their way to expatriation, the valley was a wilderness. On the ramparts of St. Quentin, which from a distance overlooked the scene, paced the square-built men with the brass-spiked helmets. The virgin fortress of France, never till now profaned by the foot of an invader, was held by the Landwehrmen, and the streets of the town echoed to the clash of the German subaltern's sword.

As I drove out across the glacis of Fort Belle Croix, I was struck with the alteration which had taken place there since the previous day. Then the whole expanse swarmed with life. Cavalrymen, artillerymen, infantrymen, were blended in chaotic confusion, out of which it seemed impossible to evolve order. Now the expanse lay blank and bare. Cavalrymen, artillerymen, infantrymen, had been drafted off it. Nothing was left but the mud and a few horses, too debilitated to be removed, and dropping, even as I passed, into the slush out of which they should never rise. There was a horse market in Metz on the 30th, or rather just outside the gate. I imagine a good many horses changed hands to which the parties who disposed of them would have had some difficulty in proving a valid title. Prices ranged from a franc and a half up to five pounds, but this latter was a fancy price, and only given for an officer's charger of breeding and substance.

After seeing the prisoner-train leave Courcelles, I drove away northward, and after visiting the headquarter staff of the 7th Army Corps at Puche, and my friends of the 4th regiment at Retonfay, went into the lager of Lebœuf's corps on the slope between Château-Gras and Retonfay. It was getting towards evening by this time,

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and I was in the right time for seeing the Frenchmen making their preparations for bivouac. What splendid fellows they were to be sure at this kind of work. Already the tents had a drain through each to carry off the surface water. The great poplar trees on the chaussée—those that the Germans had left standing—were falling fast. Those that the Germans had felled the Frenchmen were chopping up into lengths, and carrying off to the bivouac fire. Others stood round the bivouac fires or lay on curious improvised beds, contrived with dexterously-placed stones to keep their constructors out of the mud. In the blaze of the fires were pots and saucepans; rather than part from a saucepan when he has once secured it, I believe a French soldier would lose one of his boots. The pots and saucepans were simmering merrily and emitting a fragrant odour—whence it was derived I could not guess. The rations had been meat and biscuit; nothing else save salt. The men had dug up again the already thrice turned over potato fields and might have got a few tubers. But potatoes, and meat, and biscuits were impotent to create the pleasant odour, one of the recondite mysteries of French cookery.

The atmosphere after the capitulation was full of stories of the prices paid in Metz during the siege for articles of food. Most of these were to be taken *cum grano*, since the beleaguered, now that it was all over, not unnaturally took a pleasure in piling on the agony. But the one which I am going to narrate I had from an undeniable source, and I give it as illustrative of the profligate frivolity among the wealthier and more aristocratic officers, which has been one of the chief causes of the ruin of the French army. There had been in Metz during the siege a certain lady of the Parisian demi-monde, who had come to Metz when the Emperor came,

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and could not get away when he retired *viâ* Verdun to Châlons. Two officers of the Garde Impériale had been rivals for this lady's affections. The lady, it seemed, had a fanciful and delicate appetite, and one day in the early part of the last month of the siege she expressed a fervent wish to be regaled on turkey and truffles. "Ah, you know that is an impossibility," was the rejoinder of one of the swains. "I don't know that," said the other, eager for an opening; "I shall try what I can do." The other, in his jealousy, offered to bet 500 francs that he would not succeed, and the wager was accepted. The officer came to the landlord of one of the hotels and gave him the commission, adding that money was no object. The head waiter went on a foraging expedition, and after two days' search brought the officer a turkey and truffles, with a little bill for a thousand francs; so the gay guardsman won his bet and lost 500 francs.

As I was driving out to Courcelles my coachman quietly told me that his wife and three children were starving. When we returned at night I went with him to ascertain the circumstances for myself. He guided me into a part of the town close to the middle branch of the Moselle, inhabited only by the poorest of the poor. I had before then only been on the top of the crust which overlay the misery caused by this siege. I had dined and eaten dessert, I had called for wine, and lo it was forthcoming. So far as concerned the hotels, the world seemed to wag very much as its wont. I saw no ghastly faces in the streets pallid with want, as were the faces of those citizens of Antwerp, who cheered the lean Stadtholder when he swore to eat his boots before he would surrender. But it was not because there were no pale faces and attenuated forms in Metz that I did not see them in the streets, but because the miserable

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ones cared not to make a parade of their misery. It was a sorry sight the squalid room of the coachman presented. Of bread the family had not had a morsel for three days; then they had received as ration two pounds for six. One of the six—an infant two years old—wants rations no more. The little body lay on two planks under the window, the victim of bodily exhaustion, from deficient and improper food. How could a child of two years survive on sinewy horseflesh, in scanty quantity, and on a casual morsel of bread, the meal of which was mixed with sawdust and chopped straw to make it eke out? All up and down the poverty-stricken street the wretchedness was much the same. Horseflesh and want of salt had killed off the children like flies. The mortality among the little ones had been frightful. The elder children were covered with blotches and scorbutic sores, caused by want of salt and of variety in their food.

As regards the inhabitants of Metz itself, it seemed likely that the misery would soon come to an end. There was no want of wealth in Metz, and the rich citizens were reported to be public spirited. Now that food could be bought, it was sure to be bought and distributed freely. But no such amelioration was to be expected for the wretchedness—a wretchedness almost without hope—of the villagers inhabiting the country around Metz. They had nothing—not even a roof above them, in the pitiless rain. Of their cottages nought was standing but the bare walls, often pounded with shells. Their gardens were waste, their cattle were gone, their furniture was wrecked, their straw was dung, their fields lay fallow and studded with graves. A day spent in the misery around Metz must have made as water a heart hard as the nether millstone. But help came to the helpless. It will be long ere "the Friends" will cease to

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be remembered by the simple peasant people whom they helped through the ghastly slough of despond.

The railway into Metz having been opened on the 30th, a convoy of 300 generals and superior officers went off at five o'clock in the afternoon. On the 31st, at 10.30, a train left for Mayence, *viâ* Nancy, for the accommodation of generals and chief staff officers. A regular series of trains was organised on the 1st of November for regimental officers. The first, leaving at 9.30, accommodated the officers of the garrison; the second, at 1.30, for the officers of the Imperial Guard, cavalry of the reserve, and engineers. At 1.30, the officers of Canrobert's corps (the 6th), and division of Forton. At 4.15 a train took off the officers of the 2nd Corps (Frossard's), and the brigade Lapasset; and at 6.15, the 3rd Corps (Leboeuf's). Great consideration was invariably shown by the German authorities for the officers, and careful arrangements were made for the wounded and sick French, chiefly under the supervision of German doctors.

I spent the afternoon of the 31st in inspecting, so far as time would permit, the fortifications of the town of Metz, and those constituting its exterior defences. What I had already gathered concerning the natural and artificial strength of the forts of St. Quentin, St. Julien, Plappeville, St. Eloy, and Queleu I found more than borne out by personal investigation. Whoever holds Metz holds an impregnable fortress. Nothing can so much as get at the fortress of Metz proper while the outworks hold out; and there is no reason that, properly garrisoned and provisioned, they should not hold out for ever. It might be possible to batter down St. Eloy or Queleu, the others cannot be got at advantageously in

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any way on account of the strength of their natural position. The weak point of the fortress is towards the east, between Queleu and St. Julien; but the complement of the defence on that side is made up by the "provisional" earthwork of les Bottes. From what I heard I think it probable that the day after the 14th of August, the Germans, if they had made a dash, and had been prepared for severe losses, might have effected a lodgment in front of Fort Belle Croix in this direction, and, indeed, if all tales were true, might have pushed their way into the town itself. We all know how easy it is to be wise after the event. The English army in the Crimea was abused for not going straight into Sebastopol two days after the Alma, instead of sitting down on the bleak plateau over against the fortress. Had its leaders known the state of the fortifications, no doubt the weary winter and the heaps of dead might have been spared to Britain. So with the Germans before Metz. I was assured that so confident were the French of success—so ridiculous did they think the idea that it was possible to invest Metz—that it was not till after the battle of Forbach that serious efforts had been made to place the fortress in an efficient state of defence. The guns were not mounted till then behind the embrasures. Les Bottes was unfinished—a mere heap of shapeless earth. Even now it was not properly finished, and looked as slovenly a piece of fortification work as I ever saw put out of hand by troops who asserted they had engineers in their ranks. Nevertheless, it had a front, and guns mounted on that front. The Germans, ever masterful and prompt, would not, I was satisfied, delay long to alter les Bottes from a "provisional" into a permanent fort. Subsequent events bore out this anticipation; and, with their efficient and thorough system of administration, Metz, if im-

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pregnable hitherto, will be henceforth, if such a thing can be, doubly impregnable.

From what I learned, there had been a good deal more of huckstering than patriotism among the civilian population of Metz. There was a reason for the *émeute* on the evening of the 28th. The wily burghers had been keeping back their stores for a market, while their poorer fellows hungered because of the high prices, and the army starved. Horses were dying daily for want of forage; yet the Germans found stores of hay and corn quietly stowed away in unlikely places. It was the same with other articles of consumption, and the administration seemed to have been either not strong enough or not cunning enough to make everything forthcoming for the common good. Napoleon called us a nation of shopkeepers, but I take leave to doubt whether our shopkeepering idiosyncrasy would have developed itself in such a manner. I could not help having a quiet chuckle at the douce burghers, whose market Bazaine had spoiled. How they hated him for it! And they spoke their minds right venomously after the French manner.

If one listened to all he heard, he was bound to accept the conclusion that Bazaine was a renegade and traitor of the largest possible calibre. It seemed, according to the gossip of the natives, savage that their canny little scheme for putting money in their purses had failed, that Bazaine nourished the design of having himself declared Regent of France, and that he only relinquished this ambitious project for the consideration of a fabulous subsidy, contributed I could not exactly learn by whom. It was useless to point out to the angry and disappointed cits that on the face of it this was rubbish, and that Bazaine kept his upper lip straight and his face to the foe so long as, and indeed longer than, he had an army

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capable of fighting, marching, or standing up to be shot down. If he had had subordinates honest and capable of co-operating with him, had he been unfettered at the outset, and had the discipline and *moral* of his army not been deteriorated before he took the command of it, it might have been that the chroniclers of this war would have had a different tale to tell.

It was with a deep interest that I listened at the table d'hôte the same evening to the despondent remarks of a venerable French gentleman, who had been a colonel at Waterloo. The old man had the water in his eyes as he spoke of the depreciation in the character of the forces of his country. The cause that had wrought the curse of deteriorated discipline was, according to him, the pernicious itch for popularity with which all the French superior officers were bitten. Canrobert, he told me, had been the great initiator of this popularity-hunting fever. In his rough, bluff way he used familiarly to appeal to the private soldiers as "his children" whether their rations were what they liked, and if an ill-conditioned fellow, thus encouraged, vented a grumble, he would turn on the colonel and blow him up sky-high. One very pregnant observation he made, a remark which I had thought of all the evening, and doubly significant as coming from a Frenchman and an officer. "Surely," said I, "this will bring the French to their senses, and we must have peace in a very short time. And just as surely that peace," I continued, "must be a permanent one, for the French army, with all its craving for *la gloire*, must realise the fact that there is not much in the way of *la gloire* to be got by being greedy for the Rhine."

"I don't know," said the old man, mournfully. "Logically you are right, no doubt; but severe as the lesson has been, I question of its effect. It is the officers

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of the French army who chiefly are the clamourers—senseless and frothy clamourers—after *la gloire*. They shrieked for war, enervated with lust and absinthe as they were, ignorant of their duties, their minds uncultivated, and debilitated with luxury. I fear they are too far gone, too utterly vitiated and emasculated mentally, to be able to draw the conclusion from the premises; and I should not be surprised if, a year hence, you may hear the parole loafers who are swinging about the streets to-day, yelling for war again, as unprepared to pursue it to success as they were when this one was entered into, and as reckless and regardless of consequences as they were then and are now."

Just conceive what France must have come to when one of her *anciens militaires* could speak thus! That the officers of his army were, in his opinion, so utterly spineless as to be unable to recognise the fact that they had been beaten, the causes which had led to their defeat, and the utter impossibility that unless they purged and lived cleanly they could make even a fair fight of it against the cool-headed and heavy-handed German! The whirligig of time brings round many curious changes, but it is utterly outside the nature of things that Frenchmen as they are, as I saw them in this war from day to day, can ever, given what advantages they may, be a match in warfare for a people so constituted as those which dwell in the Vaterland. The hot iron of adversity brands deep, and has a wonderful power to cure ailments, but if the surface is so calloused that the iron will not mark, how can the beneficial result be achieved?

The old gentleman was specially severe on the Zouaves. When these regiments were first constituted, he said the ranks were really full of fighting men. But as their fame

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grew they became fashionable, and then their ruin set in. The ranks were crowded by young sprigs who had no other thought than a picturesque uniform, waxed moustaches, the demi-monde, and absinthe; and the once stout and capable regiments had lost their prowess and become enervated and flaccid. This view may be exaggerated—the *ancien militaire* of the table d'hôte was not the first man that ever put forth the opinion that "the service is going to the dogs, by Gad;" but it is in a measure confirmed by the events of this war, in which the French infantry of the line displayed far greater valour and patient endurance than the pet regiments.

One might have been surprised on entering Metz for the first time since the capitulation how little sickness was apparently existing in the town. One strolled on to the Place Royale, and there saw the streets of railway waggons, which in the early days had been brought into the town from the station—300 of them—and diverted from the carriage of luggage or merchandise to be hospitals for the reception of the sick and wounded. Here and there a convalescent limped about on crutches, or a pallid-faced man glided past, from whom you instinctively shrank with a curious feeling that the taint of the fever must be hanging about him still. But of sweeping pestilence there seemed no traces. One had to look for the deadly sickness in quiet corners in the little improvised hospitals, where there were only a few cases, or in the neglected villages around the town where hygiene had been comparatively neglected. There it was and there alone, where you could find forms which you were told were those of men, but passed out of all recognition as such, discoloured and bloated in the last stages of the foul black small-pox. It might be that you chanced on

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a lazarette into which the terrible demon of hospital gangrene had entered and fixed his relentless fang, never to be withdrawn till the earth should have been heaped on his victim. A few cases of this terrible disorder, and only a few, I saw. Not alone was the sense of sight called into requisition; no cordial in Metz seemed to have the virtue of washing the horribly fœtid odour out of my throat, where it stuck as if it were something solid. I trust no reader will ever be called to look upon the corpse of one who has died of pyæmia. One took his life in his hand going among such spectacles. Here is a house in the Isle de Saulcy in which there are five sick men and two corpses. There is a doctor with them —a lone man, for the very women, with their tender hearts hardened by the terror of the dread infection, have run away. The doctor is a mere youth in years, but there is grey already in his hair, and he tells me that the last six weeks have made him feel as an old man. With every breath he inhales he risks his life nearly as much as if he held his fist into the cage of a cobra capella. What words can describe the colour of these semicomatose forms which he handles so tenderly? Have they been blown up in an explosion, and had their skins dusted over to ease the smart of the burn, and to hide the swarthy brand of the powder? No, they are the victims of a far worse misfortune. They lie smitten to the marrow with the terrible *Typhus exanthematicus*, the floury typhus, which is happily so rare that many a respectable and capable general practitioner in Britain has never heard of it. The flour which the exanthematicus powders on the skin of its victim, seldom washes off. Almost invariably face and flour dust are alike hidden in the grave.

The railway station outside the Porte Serpenoise of

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Metz was a curious sight. It was the depôt of all the vast train of that Corps-Francs organized by the Chemin de fer de l'Est, with a military constitution, and having a material that had cost fifteen millions of francs. The corps numbered 1200 men, and they, with all their material, their bridges, their stalls, their waggons, their pontoons, and their vast timber blocks, were destined to act as the pioneers of the French army on its march "à Berlin," and to repair the damage to the communications wrought by the Germans, falling back beaten and demoralised across the Rhine on their capital. There was a bridge here in pieces, specially constructed to be thrown across the Rhine. The bridge had never quitted the locality where it was constructed. It was the prize of the army that had not only kept the watch fast and true on the German Rhine, but that was standing sentry on the Moselle, the Marne, the Seine, and the Loire. And to-day in the drizzle of the small rain, the bold Corps-Francs were slowly jogging it on the prisoner-train towards the Rhine which they had thought to approach in array so different.

Many a day it will take Metz to recover from the handiwork of the men who undertook to defend it. The tourist who in the early summer came to this virgin queen of the Moselle might have noticed outside the fortifications a belt of buildings about half an English mile in breadth. The trim villas of the wealthy citizens had stood here in the dainty gardens; the pretentious house of the mayor had been here behind its red-brick walls. There had been snug little cottages *ornées*, where dwelt ladies, about whose antecedents few knew anything, but who had fair faces and who dressed magnificently. Not one stone now remained upon another of all the villas, the mansions, the cottages. All was blank

desolation. Here and there the stump of a fountain, erstwhile standing in a pretty garden, asserted itself disconsolately, its once superincumbent Cupid or Neptune half battered into the mud. The ground was churned into slush by the tread of many footsteps, and fetid odours blew over it from the dead horses that were rotting on its surface. This belt of desolation was the *zone militaire* of Metz—the space outside the fortifications, where buildings were allowed to be erected solely on the condition that if it should be necessary at any time for military exigencies to destroy them, the owners should not be entitled to claim compensation. The military exigency came in July last, and now the portly mayor might bite his thumb, and the owners of the villas and the cottages grope about the ruins for salvage, for no consolation was forthcoming for them in the shape of compensation.

On the 1st of November I continued my investigations as to the condition of the French sick who had been left by the capitulation as a legacy to the Germans. In those inquiries I derived great assistance from the courteous kindness of Dr. Leithold, of the division of General Kummer, on whom devolved the supervision of all the medical and sanitary arrangements. Dr. Leithold had in all inherited about 19,000 sick men, among whom were included only sixty German prisoners—all the rest were Frenchmen. This included the sick in the field hospitals and the various forts. The diseases chiefly raging were typhus and dysentery, the latter with a strong tendency to assume the phase of the former. There were not many cases, however, of spotted or floury typhus. Small-pox was far from rare, and in not a few cases it was of the most virulent form. A good deal of scurvy was also existing. I fancy that a great quantity of scurvy cases of

a mild type had not been allowed to enter the hospitals, for of the prisoners in the lager by Retonfay I saw a considerable number bearing the evidences of suffering from this disease. With the good and varied rations now being distributed, a disease which had been superinduced by their absence was sure soon to disappear. In order at once to clear for the occupation of troops the barracks in Metz, hitherto used as hospitals, and to provide a change into higher and purer air, all the sick able to move were being sent out into the highlying forts surrounding the town. This step, it was hoped, would stimulate healthy action in systems which had become low, degenerate, and stagnant, and good nourishment, which was being provided with a lavish hand, would naturally co-operate greatly in the setting up of this healthy action. His Excellency von Kummer deserves to be held in honour by all humanity for the prompt and solicitous arrangements which he caused to be instituted for relieving the pressure on the sick of the pre-capitulation condition of things. A great bakery of white bread was at once set up in the Caserne des Chasseurs, and orders were circulated that all medical officers in charge of lazarettes should have carte blanche to make requisitions for bread. Stores were hurried in of coffee, chocolate, soup extract, and other comforts, and by Sunday morning there were very few sick who were not the better of the advent of the Germans. Prior to the establishment of the regular system of supply, the Berliner Hülfsverein, represented by Herren Adolph Schwabe and E. Minlos, was, with the English Ambulance, among the first to commence a distribution of comforts. Britons may be glad to know that they too helped towards the Liebesgaben with which were packed the fourgons of the Berliner Hülfsverein, since the British National Society helped its funds with a donation of 1000*l.*,

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the administration of which was confided to Mr. Schwabe. As General von Senden and his staff entered the town a scene occurred, pathetic enough in one aspect to move the deepest sympathies of those who love the Fatherland and its children, and yet not without a certain grotesqueness that only affords another illustration of the narrow gap which exists between tears and laughter. As the General rode down the Rue de la Prison Militaire, he passed the prison of the Maison d'Arrêt, where the German prisoners taken on the 7th at Maizières were confined. As the Landwehrmen on that day had met the foe with shouts of "Hurrah Preussen!" and "Immer vorwärts!" so now, gaunt, hollow-eyed, and squalid, the great gallant fellows cheered their countrymen as they came on. The cheer was hardly so full-volumed as when it had echoed through the gables of Ladonchamps; scanty rations exclusively of horseflesh were not quite the class of feeding off which to cheer lustily. But von Senden, not unfamiliar with the cheers of his Landwehrmen, heard the "Hurrah Preussen!" from behind the bars, and halting, called out to his Kinder to know how they fared. The hungry men told their plight, and the general turning to the Intendant who rode behind him, asked when he could have food up for the wants of the prisoned Landwehrmen. "Not for an hour at least," was the reply. Then von Senden turned to Mr. Schwabe, the bearer of the Liebesgaben, and asked whether he could do nothing till the Intendant got up his column. The fourgons of the Berliner Hülfsverein were not a furlong behind, and they came up at the trot. The bread tumbled out of the waggons, and in at the prison windows. But the waggons contained other provender than bread, and the question was asked of the prisoners as they munched their bread, what relish they would have to it. Who that knows the

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German palate but can anticipate the reply. "Haben Sie Wurst?" was the response, as if from one man, and then from behind came a piping voice, it must have been an epicurean boy who spoke—"Oder Schinken?" Wurst is the German sausage, suggestive to the British mind of trichinæ, and other nameless horrors, but dearer to the German heart than any other edible. Then they got cigars—the prisoners—and von Senden and the Berliner Hülfsverein passed on, the former to take up his head-quarters, the latter to distribute their arrowroot, tea, woollen garments, winter beds, biscuits, and what not of Liebesgaben to the wretched French sick.

On returning to the Hôtel de l'Europe, after a round of the hospitals, I found in the *salle* an officer from Retonfay who had ridden in to tell me that the General in command of the brigade had sent to desire me to call upon him. It was very well calling on generals if one went of his own accord, but a summons to attend was calculated to make one nervous. Had I been writing of the positions without sufficient discretion, I anxiously asked of myself, or had any order been issued to forbid correspondents from frequenting the foreposts? Speculation was useless, and I went straight out in the moonlight to the big château inhabited by the General, in the outskirts of Retonfay. There was no frown on the features of the gallant old Pole; my portion was a warm grip of the hand, and a cordial salutation. The General, instead of having a wigging for me, wished to ask a favour of the journal I represented. The General's children are half English, his wife is an English lady, and his mother-in-law, who, to judge from the enthusiastic manner in which the General spoke of her, is utterly unlike mothers-in-law in general, had thoughtfully sent her fighting son-in-law a box of concentrated soups all the way from a

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western suburb of London. The gift had moved the General to tender thanks, if he might, through the columns of an English journal, and to make of the box of soups a peg on which to hang a compliment to the British nation. The General pondered, as he ate his soup, on the form which this communication should take, apologising to me for his silence from the circumstance that he desired "to make a little wit." When he had got to the salad, he found the spirit move him, and he dictated as follows: —"I thank you, dear grandmamma, for your delicious soups; the vermicelli and the tail ox are delicious. The North German Ambassador has made a mistake when he said that the English nation has only manifested a warm-heartedness towards the French. As I eat my dinner, I am a witness to the contrary.—Your loving son,—von Zglinitzki, Major-General." The good General slightly distorted the relation existing between him and the relative he desired to address; but I supposed he had taken the word from his children.

On the 2nd of November the whole of the 10th Army Corps defiled through Metz on its southward march towards Troyes. Its General, Voigts-Rhetz, sat in the saddle in the Place Royale, with Kummer beside him, and a background formed of the trucks devoted to hospital purposes. On the other side of the broad thoroughfare stood groups of French officers looking on critically as the men went past with whom they had so often been engaged. To have seen the different regiments pass the saluting point with everything about them as neat as if they had come out of barracks, you would never have thought they could have been doing forepost work and fighting for two months. Fresh, stout, clean, and supple, the great stalwart fellows came past with the German quick step in one long continuous stream for two hours,

and long before all had passed the Frenchmen had sunk into a dull silence that seemed to betoken acquiescence in an inevitable fate. There was no cheering or singing; the bands played as they passed the General, but the "Wacht am Rhein" was kept for the country roads. Besides the 10th, the 3rd Army Corps was on the march for Troyes. The 7th for the present was to remain in Metz; the 2nd had started Paris-ward before the capitulation; and the 1st, after seeing off the last of the prisoners, was destined for the northern march toward Lille and Amiens, along with the 8th Corps. General Kummer, leaving the commandership of the town for an active command, was succeeded by General von Löwenfeld. General Kummer, during his brief tenure of a very difficult and delicate office, had earned a well-deserved popularity. His urbanity and consideration to the French officers were appreciated warmly by them all, and not a few of them referred to the subject in my hearing with deep feeling. I have omitted to mention before, that when the report of the capitulation became spread abroad throughout the army on the evening of the 28th Oct., a great number of regimental officers had a sort of caucus meeting, in which they discussed the matter. Universal indignation at the conduct of Bazaine was expressed, and it having been estimated that the officers present were able to rely on the fidelity of a following of some 25,000 men, it was resolved that a desperate effort should be made that same night to cut a way through the German lines. The meeting separated, and one of its members came to the Hôtel de l'Europe, where, over a bottle of champagne, he made his last will and testament, and with a tear in his eye, committed it to his friend my informant, and went forth with set teeth on his desperate emprise. Next morning he came back to breakfast, blythe as a bird,

and reclaimed his will. It seemed there had been a miscalculation. Instead of the following of 25,000 men on which the officers had relied, they could not get a man to follow them. The realisation of the misconception prevented the attempt being made.

I never tired of passing my time in watching the Place Royale and the Esplanade, on which were quartered the wounded. On the former were the railway car hospitals, on the latter are fine roomy tents, holding twelve men each comfortably. What a variety of mutilations you noticed among the convalescents. Men who had lost a leg, others a foot, others an arm; the gamut of mutilation was run up and down till you almost expected to see a man walking about without a head. It was a listless, weary promenade which these unfortunates executed. Some few formed little groups for conversation, and others made belief to play at a kind of outdoor billiards on a wooden frame on the ground, but most patrolled languidly backwards and forwards, with a dejected listlessness that was the more painful to witness because it is so un-Frenchlike. I suppose they must have been tired of the promenade at the top of the Esplanade over against the river, for there were seldom more than a few there. And yet the view from it is one of which I think it must take a long time to get weary. If I could think the inhabitants of the Esplanade possessed of so much depth of feeling, I would fain have imagined that they shun the promenade on the ramparts that the sight of so much of beauty lost to France might not wound them too poignantly. Behind, among the tents, are the statues, and the still bright flower-beds. In front, at one's feet, are the outworks and then the broad stream of the river, with the fertile meadows of Simphorien beyond. On the right, across the stream, is the Isle

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de Sauley, the island of the weeping willows, with its powder-magazines all but hidden among the graceful willows and the tall poplars. On the left is the citadel, with its green earthworks and glacis, and beyond the beautiful suburb of Montigny, with the bend of the stream farther on ending in the railway bridge, the horizon to the south, bounded by the range of heights, of which the highest is Mont St. Blaise, with its ruined château and the Observatory, from which I had looked down on the plain and city. Over St. Simphorien is the other branch of the Moselle, fringed by the nestling villages of Moulin, St. Ruffine, Ban St. Martin, and Devant-les-Ponts, wearing a very peaceful aspect but for the absence of smoke from the chimneys. Over them towers abruptly the rugged Mont St. Quentin, with the vineyards on its shoulders, lovingly hugging the white villages, then the bare interval of red scarp, and then the summit, crowned by the great spreading fortress, its warm grey tint brought out in the slanting sunbeams. Well may St. Quentin be called "the eagle of Metz," soaring over the valley, as it does, up in the very sky. Alas! for France and Metz, the wings of the eagle were shorn. On its ramparts there was an eagle still, it is true, but it was the eagle on the helmet of the Prussian sentry, who as he paused in his beat, and looked down on what a week before deserved the name its inhabitants so fondly gave it, "La Pucelle," may be trying how he can adapt the German song, "Oh Strassburg, oh Strassburg, du wunderschöne Stadt," to the new conquest. Verily, it is a wonderful city, a city for the possession of which to stake everything and to fight to the last man and the last ditch. Now that the German army had seen it—few who have not studied him know what an instinctive eye the German soldier has for the beauties of nature—he would not be a discreet man who

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should have suggested that the prize should be let slip. Nothing so much strengthened Bismarck's hand in his demand for Lorraine, as the opportunity the German army had for seeing and admiring Metz.

The very heavens seemed to smile on the capture of la Pucelle. For days before Bazaine had sent in his capitulation it had seemed as if a repetition of the deluge of Noah was in progress. All the low country was inundated; where the waters had not yet reached, the ground was a thin, spongy, quagmire of mud. On the day that the Germans marched in and the French marched out, the heavens still wept copiously, as if in lamentation over a spectacle so full of woe for France. But when the German sentry had taken his post on the gates, and when the black and white flag floated out over the huge brown works of Plappeville, out came the sun in a joyous radiance. As if by magic, the waters abated. On St. Simphorien, where but the day before the dove could have found no rest for the sole of her foot, an army might now have manœuvred. The mud dried up, and the roads become hard again—those wonderful roads that stubbornly resisted deterioration by the grinding wheels of the cannon and proviant columns, and which ought of themselves to prevent the name of the Third Napoleon, their constructor, from being held in execration by the French. Under the bracing influence of the bright sun and the frosty wind, everybody and everything seemed to regain cheerfulness. The French prisoners yet remaining in Retonfay had somehow got the mud off their clothes, and with the mud had gone the moodiness. The German troops had heel-balled the eagle on their helmets, and polished after a fashion the long boots that for days before had been caked with successive layers of mud. The townspeople, in all their sullenness, felt and

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yielded to the influence of the fine weather. The ladies of the place, of whom hitherto we had only caught glimpses as a pretty face peered out from behind a window-blind, came out into the streets, and tripped along, daintily booted and delicately gloved, among the dashing German subalterns, who might have been excused for glances of undisguised admiration, and among the throng of common soldiers, who seemed unimpressible, but were as courteously civil as if they had served an apprenticeship as masters of the ceremonies. Metz seemed to have no objection to any amount of what it no doubt considered the mammon of unrighteousness in the shape of Prussian thalers. All the shops were open, and had got stocked with a rapidity that might have been accounted for either by concealed stores or by wonderful enterprise in getting supplies speedily from Saarbrück or Nancy. The cafés swarmed with German officers, with French officers, with French civilians. It was already two days since the departure of the last train had been notified for the conveyance of French officers to Germany, but there must still have been close on 1800 of them left in Metz. I suppose the greater proportion of them must have been on the sick or convalescent list, but I saw comparatively few who appeared seriously ailing. The diverse propensities of the two armies in the matter of drinking could be seen at a glance by a visit to a café. The German officer, trim, neat, buttoned up to the throat, dressed as regimentally as if on parade, and with a carriage that might suggest his having swallowed a ramrod, entered, saluted the room all round with a stiff-necked bow and a chink together of his spurred heels; then stalked to a seat, and called for a "Glas Bier." The French officer, his frogged and furred undress pilot coat open at the throat, and showing a slice

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of shirt-collar and of front—a dickey, for aught I know —and with the invariably white or brightly-coloured cravat, thrown loosely round his neck, lounged in with his hands in his pockets, nodded to a friend, tumbled in a heap on to a settee—if he ever swallowed a ramrod the gastric juice must have made pulp of it long ago—and called for a *petit verre* of cognac or absinthe. He took his tipple neat, fiery as it is. As the German plunged his moustache into the froth of his beer flagon, he gave one the idea that he was drinking because he had thirst and wanted to quench it. It was impossible to think the same of the Frenchman as he took a sip out of the little glass, and rolled the spirit round his mouth and under his tongue with as much gusto as if it had been a sin.

As I was strolling on the Esplanade, on the morning of the 4th, I met a comfortable-looking old gentleman, in gaiters and woollen gloves. A remark as to the scenery served as a mutual introduction, and he told me he was an old officer of artillery who, during the greater part of the siege, had held the position of Commandant of Fort Queleu, and who, when capitulation seemed imminent, had returned to the civil life, out of which the siege had temporarily called him, so as to escape expatriation as a prisoner of war. The good old gentleman spoke very frankly as to the events of the siege, and had no hesitation in speaking his mind as to Marshal Bazaine, and the motives by which, from first to last, he had been actuated. When the Army of the Rhine first fell back around the fortifications of Metz, after the battle of the 18th of August, instead of making efforts which he thought undoubtedly would have been successful, to push onward for a junction with the rest of the French forces, Bazaine's explanation to his principal officers for his policy was to the effect that the forts of Metz were in

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a defensive condition so backward that he dared not, consistently with his duty to France and his impression as to the importance of Metz as the premier fortress of the Empire, abandon it in its then inchoate condition to a defence to be carried on solely by its garrison. In this view the commander of Fort Queleu declared that he completely coincided. Comparatively trivial efforts would, he believed, have sufficed to reduce Metz immediately after the 18th of August, had there been no army to support the garrison, and to strengthen the fortifications, and had the Germans taken immediate advantage of the state of weakness. Bazaine, he continued, with a zeal and industry beyond all praise, had put the forts into a state of efficient defence by the end of the month. It was then, according to my informant's views, that his presence for the first time became *de trop* in Metz, and then it was that he ought, with all the vigour he could exert, to have burst through the German cordon and got at large. That he could have done this, whether in prosecution of the temporarily energetic sortie which lasted over two days—31st August and 1st September—in the direction of Noisseville, Servigny, and St. Barbe, or in the better line down the valley of the Moselle, my interlocutor had no doubt; and it is fair to him to mention that I found many German officers who could not conscientiously differ from this view. After the middle of September, however, Bazaine's position, in view of breaking-out tactics, had become hopeless. Sickness was decimating his ranks; his troops had already eaten deep into the means for transporting artillery and train. I asked the old commandant how, in his opinion, it was that Bazaine did not strike a decisive blow for extrication after his presence in Metz for good had ceased. The reply, to my thinking, was very pregnant. Bazaine, a capable

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general, a gallant man, and a sincere patriot, hung balanced between two stools. Instead of looking with a single eye to his duties as a military commander, he became distracted with political complications. In the early days he was studying the interests of the Emperor, and the means of conserving for Imperialistic uses the army under his command. Later on, the poison of personal ambition had impregnated the system of the hitherto straightforward soldier. He had nourished dreams of seeing himself Regent of France, and made ducks and drakes of his reputation without attaining the personal *quid pro quo* he hankered after.

What a strange kaleidoscopic scene in those early post-capitulation times did the great room of the Hôtel de l'Europe present from day to day! Yesterday it had been thronged by officers of the 7th Army Corps; to-day it was the 8th; on the morrow it would be the turn of the first to snatch a glass of the "sparkling" before the route is taken for the champagneless villages on the line of march. As I sit in my quiet corner, there comes clinking and clattering in a divisional staff; hussars blue, hussars green, hussars red, hussars brown, and hussars black—the last with the grinning death's head and the crossed thigh-bones in silver on the busbies. All are speaking at once, most at the top of their voices, and the clamour is for champagne, of which 400 bottles were drunk in one day in the room in which I sit. If I had the portrait edition of the *Almanach de Gotha*, I might identify the bearers of some of the proudest names in the Fatherland; for the wearers of the showy uniforms are many of them princes and poins. Of Grafs and Freiherrs, the crop is too large to take any account of. This young slip of a lad with the pale face and the slight moustache is of the blood royal of Russia, and not many

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removes off the throne of the Czar. He is studying the art of war, attached to the staff of General Manteuffel. If grim Nicholas—he of the Roman nose and strong jaw —were alive to-day, with what interest would he be watching this contest, and how searching would be his questioning of his young kinsman on his return to the banks of the Neva! Who is this straight, square man, stiff of figure and massive of head, that comes quietly into the room alone? All rise respectfully as the door frames, as in a picture, that powerful figure. The sparse hair on the face is but slightly grizzled; surely the man with the few medals on his broad breast, and the simple General's star at his button-hole cannot be a personage of great distinction. You may search in vain the roll of the German army to find a name more honoured or more deserving of honour. The big quiet man is General von Göben, the commander of the 8th Army Corps, the youngest commander of an army corps in the Prussian service, the one who has seen the most fighting. So gluttonous is he for fighting, that when there was peace within the borders of the Fatherland this modern Bayard was fighting in the fierce internal strifes of Spain. In this war he has borne the brunt of the hardest fighting. At Spicheren he had relieved Kamecke of the command; on the rugged slope of Gorze, and in the thickets of the Bois des Genivaux, he saw full many of his Rhinelanders go down. Von Göben seats himself beside a burly officer with a bushy beard, clad in the white and green of the Cuirassiers. The pallor of the big officer's face contrasts markedly with his jetty beard. Well may he be pale. A furrow of that field at the north of Vionville soaked in not a little of his blood as he lay there on the night of the 16th of August, a chassepot ball in his chest and a sword-cut across that hard, bullet head of his. It

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was he who led the Cuirassiers, diminished from a strong regiment to a weak squadron in that last death-charge against the French battery. He took the cigar out of his mouth to shout the "Vorwärts," and then sat down in his saddle and spurred the big bay into a charging gallop. It was his luck and his hard head, he tells you, that pulled him through when so many of his brother officers fell to rise no more. And now he is a Rittmeister, no less, and has a good chance of the order *pour mérite*. At a side-table there sit together an Oberst of reserve Uhlans, and a quiet little officer in a general's uniform. The chubby Oberst ought to have an army corps at least, if, indeed, he should not supersede von Moltke, to judge of the energetic and fluent manner in which he is demonstrating how a battle should be won to the quiet little taciturn man beside him, who has a queer half comical look in those grey eyes of his. The Oberst is, to use a vulgar phrase, teaching his grandmother to suck eggs. The little General commands a division, and has before to-day directed the operations of an army. He is the author of a standard work on military strategy; whereas the Oberst for the last dozen years has been tilling his acres away in Pomerania. Nearer to me is a group of subalterns of a Hohenzollern regiment, the youngsters drinking Rhine wine when all others in the room are votaries of champagne. The Hohenzollerns affect "a deep deep draught of the good Rhine wine," for they are a Rhineland Regiment, and it has always been a regimental tradition to stick to the Rüdesheim. In the group is a blithe young face I know right well. Many a hearty clink of glasses has passed between us, not a few mornings have we patrolled together the fore-posts in the valley on the French side of Saarbrück. Under the silky moustache you may faintly trace two

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slight weals. How they came there is a story. The lad was among the foremost up the steep of the Spicherenberg. So difficult was the climb that he had to take to his hands and knees, and, as you may see a butcher do, he stuck his sword between his teeth. Like a silly fellow, he turned the edge inwards instead of outwards, and when, after his manner, he took to roaring "Vorwärts," the keen blade enlarged the naturally by no means diminutive orifice of his mouth. At another table sits Kummer, the chief of the Landwehr men, with a certain Landwehr, fatherly look about himself. In the corner opposite me is the sole group out of uniform. Two are the almoners of the Berliner Hülfsverein, the third is Professor Kollmann, of Munich, who has thrown aside the toga and the doctor's cap to take the charge of a lazarette. The fourth is, what think you?—a lady. In the military history of Europe the name of von Alten is not unknown to fame. It can be unfamiliar to no student of Waterloo literature. The male von Altens of to-day are all soldiers, and the lady at the table with the Professor is their sister, and a sick nurse in an hospital at Chalons. In the salons of Berlin there was no fairer face than that of Agnes von Alten; now the salons know it no more; but when the soldier awakes from out of his delirium, or when the chloroform-influence leaves him after an operation, he finds her bending over him in tender solicitude. There are those, I fancy, in the gay staff coats at the centre table, who would gladly hail a wound if they could only choose their nurse.

The forenoon of the 5th I devoted to a careful examination of the French line of defence which opposed the German environment on the west. A description of its characteristics may, I fear, be but dull reading, but I do not feel myself entitled on that account to refrain from

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writing it, looking at the fact that the salient points of this line of defence probably disappeared within a few weeks after, and that some details with regard to it may not be useless in a humble way to the Alison or the Kinglake of this stupendous war. Crossing the river and the Thionville Railroad, on which a train of repairing materials was moving forward with a tentative slowness that reminded me of a Highland pony's movements in a bog, I traversed a flat expanse of considerable size, which had been occupied as the French Guards' camp, and then passed through Ban St. Martin, noticing on the way the château in which Bazaine had had his head-quarters. The abrupt rise of St. Quentin began two steps after I had cleared the lanes of Ban St. Martin. Looking at this hill from where you will, you cannot question its steepness; but how steep it is on the face looking towards the town is only to be appreciated by whoever essays to climb it on a frosty morning, when the air is rarefied, and when the ground has yielded its hardness caused by the frost into superficial slipperiness caused by the sun's heat. There was no road but a faint footpath through the vineyards, which soon broke into what may be called a spray of still tinier tracks, and then utterly disappeared. As I toiled slowly and laboriously up the slippery steep, it became apparent to me that a position such as that of Fort St. Quentin, so advantageous because of its isolation and the great area which its height allows it to dominate, may yet have elements of weakness caused by its very isolation and height. Looking upward as I clambered, I could see no grim earthworks on the crest, no cannon mouths depressed so as to sweep this ascent. The hill shoulders up very steeply for three-fourths its height, and then "tumbles home" so rapidly to the summit on which stands the fort, that its base, as well as the lower steeps,

are protected from the fire of the fort by the convexity of the more upland configuration. This fire could not be brought to bear upon these spaces directly, no matter by what expedient, and if once, therefore, an enemy's force could get across the outside area swept by the guns of the fort, it might nestle snugly, if audaciously, right under the lee of the fortress, keeping itself safe much in the same manner as we read of a nigger sticking on the back of a crocodile while the monster snaps his jaws and lashes his tail to no purpose. All that St. Quentin could do in the way of dislodgment must be by an indirect and plunging fire, and the bay of safety is so close, that its artillery essaying any such fire would have to fire at an elevation closely approaching to the perpendicularly upwards. But a glance backward as one climbs forcibly impresses on one the care and skill with which the several parts of the defence of Metz are made to dovetail one into the other. Where the configuration of the ground draws the teeth of St. Quentin, the bare tusks of the citadel of Metz show themselves dangerously. Its guns look across the Simphorien on to the alluvial plateau of Ban St. Martin and the lower steeps of Mont St. Quentin, and change the "bay of safety" into a position utterly untenable, while the batteries of Montigny and Longeville, one face pointing up the river, the other athwart it, opposed at once a direct and enfilading fire to any body of troops rash enough to essay the path leading to this same untenable bay of safety. Nor was this all that has been done to guard this access, and to negative the feasibility of this place of lodgment. Out of the round shoulder of Mont St. Quentin, just where the "tumbling home" begins, there rises an abrupt, isolated peak, a kind of junior Mont St. Quentin in itself. On the summit of this Bazaine's engineers had knocked up a hasty,

but most useful outwork. A strong loopholed palisading enclosed bomb-proof subterranean quarters for about half a battalion, and there were evidences that on the top of this bomb-proof a couple of pieces of artillery had been mounted. From the slits in the palisading the infantry men standing on the tread could have searched with the muzzles of their chassepots the "bay of safety," while the shells from the depressed pieces of artillery could have torn down through the steeps of the vineyards, or pelted into the pretty châteaux and snug cottages of Ban St. Martin in the level bottom.

Traversing the interval between this useful outwork, and the almost upright substructure of granite blocks which forms the eastern foundation of Fort St. Quentin, I came upon a deep cutting, crossed by a foot-bridge. At the bottom of the cutting was a railway worked by wire ropes. At the summit of the incline, a little to my right, was the house of the stationary engine that had puffed so assiduously during the siege, but that was now silent and deserted. On the left the track seemed to tumble over a precipice into the valley of the Moselle, near to Longeville—the declivity must in truth be very steep. This line, used for the transport of building materials and munitions of war for Fort St. Quentin, and a continuation of which had performed the same function for Fort Plappeville, was constructed, it may be interesting for railway readers to know, on the same gauge as the well-known Festiniog line. It must have been of extraordinary importance during the building and siege operations. Crossing the flying bridge of the railway, I climbed up on to the plateau on which stands the fort, through a perfect litter of chassepot guns and chassepot ammunitions, which had been strewed there by the French troops to whom the order had been given to lay

down their arms within the fortification. I skirted its left, making for the brow of the mount, looking out over against the plateau of St. Hubert and Châtel St. Germain, anxious, as on the morning of the 19th of August I had seen the French army lying on this brow, to see how from it the Prussian position must have appeared.

Fort St. Quentin by no means occupies the whole of the summit of the hill of the same name. It stands on an almost imperceptibly raised space on the extreme verge of the eastern extremity. To the westward extends a rugged flat of about a mile in length, by half as much in breadth. The appearance the hill presents was as if some Titan of old had shaved off flat its pointed top, and then strewed boulders over the surface. These boulders, as well as the space between them, are now covered with a short, half-heathy sward. It was then on this flat that the French had sought refuge when at daylight on the 19th of August we looked out from the miserable bivouac on the blood-stained field of Gravelotte, and saw their white tents between us and the dull heavy mass of Fort St. Quentin, as if for safety they were throwing their bare arms around the protecting fortress. On the flat were yet visible the traces of the trenches they had dug around the tents, and their *al fresco* kitchen fires had left their marks on the sward. I was not a little surprised on pressing forward to the edge of this flat to find its margin bordered by a substantial and systematically constructed entrenchment. This line of entrenchment sprang up the steep side of the hill between the top and the village of Scy, which is just outside its cordon. If constructed at all during the siege, it must have been made in the early days. The face was banked up with an earthen slope now grass grown; inside was the inner

face of an upright wall of stones uncemented by mortar. This entrenchment was regularly constructed with salient and re-entering angles, and with bastion-like projections at intervals, for sweeping the face laterally. Close behind were, at intervals, bomb-proof half-underground constructions for the protection of troops not actually lining the entrenchment, and that it was not meant as a place of occasional resort, but was habitually held by defenders, was evidenced by the durable construction of the kitchens, as well as by other less savoury tokens of the continuous presence of troops. In the rear of the bomb-proofs, at frequent intervals, were the earthworks thrown up for batteries. Encircling, as this entrenchment did, the extreme edge of the plateau, its defenders could look right down into the valley below, as well as across at the lower and less abrupt heights opposite which constitute the fringe of the plateau of St. Hubert; and with proper appliances and moderate determination, could, to all appearance, have prevented anything from living in, much less successfully traversing, that valley, to make an assault. This defence work of the summit of Mont St. Quentin, which may be called the key of Metz, presented an appearance so formidable as to seem almost to reduce into a superfluity the great fort in its rear; although of course the utility of the latter became obvious for all round firing at long ranges in co-operation with the other forts for the protection of Metz. This line ran away, still as strong as ever, down into the dip between the summit of Mont St. Quentin and the longer hog-backed ridge of Plappeville. As it came on upon the latter, instead of climbing directly up the face and so passing close under the grater fortification, it took a sweep westward, skirting the eminence near its base, and was continued right round to the northern front of Plappeville,

putting an effectual check upon any sudden surprise from the Bois de Châtel or the Bois de Saulny.

How deceptive are appearances! From the shattered hamlet of St. Hubert, on the grand chaussée, I had looked over to St. Quentin on the morning of the 19th August, and had thought I could have knocked at the gates of the fort after a short half-hour's walk. Now, looking from St. Quentin to St. Hubert, I could barely see the ruined hamlet, and the poplar trees on the chaussée stood up against the horizon. Yet the distance could not have been so great after all, since a shot from Fort St. Quentin on the morning I refer to had killed two German soldiers mounted at the hamlet on the chaussée. Now on the horizon were visible the long low huts which the Germans had erected as their temporary barracks. Much closer on the left, and near the chaussée, where it passes through Roserieulles on its way into the Moselle valley, I noticed the trim square earthwork, so completely constructed as to have been sodded up with turf, of a German battery. In this battery had stood the 12-pounder guns which had burned the village of Moulin les Metz in the early days of October. What the gunners in St. Quentin were thinking of to allow the erection of this earthwork in such a position I could not comprehend. To pound it to pieces they need scarcely have taken the trouble to elevate the muzzles of the great guns on the top of the casemates. A steady cannonade must have made its construction too arduous for the Germans, not given, save in rare instances, to squander lives wantonly. Nay, more, at a quarter of a mile closer still, at La Maison Blanche, just behind Longeau, there stood an impudent little affair of an improvised battery, thrown up for a few field pieces. I wondered if the gunners there, whose lives were not worth five minutes' purchase had St. Quentin

been in earnest to dislodge the cocky little concern, ever sent a six-pound shell flying across the valley at the big guns of the fort, in mere bravado. Quitting the entrenchment, I plunged down the slope, about midway between the villages of Lessy and Scy. Now I was among what had been the French outposts, guarding the country roads and the hill paths. The inartistic character of the field defences, on the French side, surprised me not a little. There was a trench across the path with the earth thrown up on the farther side, and that was all. There was no cover for retreat, there were no means of pouring in a cross fire, there was no continuation of the cordon of entrenchment, so as to give cover for a thin line of riflemen connecting the posts. It was the same with the position for a field watch in front of Plappeville, between the entrenchments and the Bois de Châtel. The half-moon ditch and paltry earthen breastwork stood there utterly isolated and disconnected. Under a hot fire from the adjacent wood, no relief could have reached it, nor could its occupants have fallen back on their supports in the inner entrenchments, without ruinous loss. It was another story when, having crossed the bottom, I came upon the German foreposts on the opposite slope. On one side of the narrow path there looked down on me a venomous little work, behind which some half-a-dozen marksmen might have stood. Half-a-dozen paces forward, on the other side, there was a duplicate. It made one uncomfortable, even in the solitude, to move about in the continual consciousness that, look which way one might, there was one of these posts looking one all but full in the face, while at least a couple of others were squinting at one on the flanks. Then right in front came an obstruction of felled trees, then the *chevaux de frise* of vineyard-stakes stuck in the ground, and last of all

the deep trench across the road, with its substantial parapet running away on either side in an unbroken cordon. It was not one road that was so protected on the German side, but all. A comparison of the field works of the rival armies impressed me, in short, with the conviction that the French works were constructed by soldiers, the German by engineers; and this surprised me the more, because the engineering ability displayed on the part of the French in the choice of sites for the forts, and in their construction, was of a very high order, an opinion, I am sure, which will be confirmed by our highest military critics.

Hark! I hear the quiet tramp of the German infantry-men marching down the narrow street. It is the 2nd Division of the 1st Army Corps on its way through Metz. Ha! here comes the 45th, fresh, clean, and confident. Can you see any gaps in those dense files of fours, although it was the 45th that furnished the 285 *tapfere Krieger* that lie in one long grave in the quiet garden by Château Gras? No, the depôt of the 45th has given over 1400 recruits to the Regiment which it feeds, and if more are wanted (and more were wanted), I doubt not the depôt is equal to the demand. And here comes the sister regiment of the brigade, the gallant 5th, the blood of whose linesmen ran in the gutters of Servigny in that "Schlacht bei Noisseville" on the afternoon of the 31st August. Here is the dashing Hauptmann, who one night, having sitten a little in the sun before it went down, took it into his head to pay a visit to the fair maidens of Villiers l'Orme. The Hauptmann lost his way, and only found it when he was under the nose of a French field watch. He lost, too, his horse, and had a night's rest in the open in the vine-berg; but he does not look much the worse for it, does he? Crash! bang! Surely I know

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that tune! It is the old "Hohenfriedberg." Faugh-a-ballagh there for the fighting 4th. If the obstruction consisted of men with arms in their hands, instead of a posse of *gamins*, the 4th would do their own work in the way of Faugh-a-ballagh. At the head of the brigade rides General Zglinitzki, full, let us hope, of "vermicelli and tail ox." He looks quite fresh and rosy. I wish his "grandmamma" could see him as he jogs through the Port de France. Ha! here comes the good Oberst, with the cares of that horrible lager of French prisoners off his mind; and now he is on the road again with a reasonable prospect of a fight. Behind him comes the 1st Battalion, marching splendidly; the houses echo again to their firm tread; and the 2nd Battalion follows, with the portly Mecklenburgher Major at its head, and young von Verzen, his adjutant, by his side. Here comes Puttkammer, "the good old man," as we used to call him, who speaks English with a Scotch accent, because he learnt it from a certain Jessie of northern extraction. What do I hear? Can it be? Yes; it is the familiar, although still far-off, salutation of "Miss Lucy, Lucy Long." Verily there is von Hosius in the flesh, and a good deal of that same, too. At his heels his Scotch terrier "Phipps," and by his side his trusty Fischer, adept at pantomime and lover of salt herrings. "*Kommen Sie mit?*" is the hearty question that greets me on every side. *Ach nein*, worse luck, old friends. To the 2nd succeeds the Fusilier Battalion, with the stalwart senior Hauptmann at its head, its major is detached on another command. Company after company passes me, the honest Kerle in the ranks grinning a kindly greeting to one who had shared with them their roughs and smooths, chiefly the former, goodness knows, for not a few weeks. Near the tail of all comes the 11th Company, my own, with stately Erdmann

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marching in its front. There is a little darn on the right breast of his coat; you would scarcely guess, to see his sturdy step and upright carriage, that it marks the spot where entered the bullet that went through him on the 14th of August. *Mein lieber Wirth*, best of chums! truest of comrades! Shall we ever meet again, I wonder? And as I live, here is Feldwebel Strauss mended again after that unlucky bullet at the Brewery, and with the company account-book sticking out of his breast as of old. They turn the corner over the bridge, and my Metz friends are out of sight. Good luck and plenty of fighting be their lot wheresoever the fortune of war may carry them, and a glad home-coming when the *Friede* comes at last!

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VOL. 1160.

MY EXPERIENCES OF
THE WAR BETWEEN FRANCE AND GERMANY

BY

ARCHIBALD FORBES.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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MY EXPERIENCES

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PART III.

PARIS.

CHAPTER I.

To the great Sortie.

HAVING returned to England for a few days after quitting Metz, it became my duty to proceed to the vicinity of Paris, to act as one of the watchers of the terrible drama which was being slowly but steadily played out with the beautiful metropolis as the centre of interest. The siege of Paris may be said to have commenced on the 21st of September, on which day the left flank of the 3rd army, and the right flank of the Maas army came together round Paris like the closing claws of a crab, and the grip was never relaxed till the preliminaries of peace were accepted at Bordeaux. The armies, divisions, brigades, and regiments dropped into their appointed places, as you may see the bolts of a strong safe-lock fall when the key is turned. The positions taken up on the opening days of the siege were not materially altered till the armistice. Temporarily and rarely an effort of the French caused a slight bulging out of the circle of

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environment, but the lost ground was always recovered. During the two months that had elapsed before I found myself before Paris there had been many skirmishes; one important sortie in force, that of the 21st October; and the capture and recapture of Le Bourget, the former event, characterised by no great shedding of blood, occurring on the 28th October, the latter, a desperate and bloody affair, taking place on the 31st October. A detailed account of the recapture of Le Bourget, gathered from the leading participators who had been left alive, will be found in the course of this chapter.

Choosing the road I knew best, I left Sedan at ten o'clock on the night of the 13th of November in the company of a Prussian courier bound for the head-quarters at Versailles, a favour for which I owe many acknowledgments to the distinguished personage through whose permission it was accorded. There was but very little interest attaching to a journey performed at full speed and without a halt, save for the purpose of changing horses at each stage. But one of its episodes may be worth narrating as an illustration of the watchful scrupulousness and sense of discipline animating German soldiers on sentry duty. My companion happened to be in civilian dress, not having expected to leave Belgium, and he therefore could not show the overt stamp of authenticity which the Feldjäger uniform confers. Thus at every turn he had laboriously to verify himself. Sedan was in a state of siege, the gates being shut at an early hour in the evening, and an order from the commandant had to be exhibited to the Landwehr under-officer at the gate before he would lower the drawbridge and make patent the way through the other defences. Just as we were outside, it occurred to my companion that he would not be likely to progress unless he had the watchword,

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and he asked the under-officer of the gate guard to give it to him. I believe this unyielding man, firm to the letter of his orders to give the watchword to nobody, would have refused it to Count Moltke himself, had he been out of uniform. There was no help for it, but to drive back to the commandant in the town, where the courier duly got the watchword, accompanied by the pleasing intelligence that it only held good for the garrison, and that he would probably encounter another watchword before he had been a mile on his road. We received confirmation of this when we reached the hamlet which forms a suburb of Donchery, on the south side of the Meuse. To the "halt" of the Landwehr-man in the road in front of the houses, we were able to give a satisfactory response, and the watchword having passed, we were told to pass likewise. But we had not gone twenty yards when another hoarse challenge came sounding out of the darkness. It came from a post of regulars, who had a watchword of their own, which prevailed throughout the brigade that occupied the territory as far as Flize. The regulars refused to have any connection with the gentlemen over the way, in the shape of the Landwehr, and the Landwehr watchword was of as little value as a brass sovereign at the counter of the Bank of England. In vain did the Landwehr sentry represent to his brother of the line that the travellers were all right, his demand for a watchword having been responded to. The sentry of the regulars would neither allow a passage nor reveal the watchword. The courier had to dismount and cross the bridge which leads over the Meuse into Donchery, where he found an officer, and became possessed of the precious watchword. Precious it turned out to be for only a very brief period. On the slope between Dom and Flize we were challenged by a patrol

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of two men, who in the accustomed manner demanded the watchword. My companion gave that which he had received at Donchery, but it seemed we were already out of the region where it had efficacy. The men of the patrol repudiated it, and looked gravely at each other. Then they spoke in a low tone of the necessity for taking us back to Dom, to avert which fate my companion produced copious legitimations, and at last contrived to satisfy the patrol that he was really a person to be permitted to pass. They not only let us pass, but they gave us the watchword which prevailed in the parts we were about to traverse. With no small gratitude we accepted the same, and went on our way rejoicing. Some distance outside of Boulzicourt, on the summit of a little swell, we were suddenly challenged in loud and stern tones. The horses had a good deal of way on them, and the driver could not pull them up quite within their own length. Louder and sterner came the challenge repeated, and we heard a couple of ominous clicks, as the sentries on the double post cocked their needle-guns. Just at the moment the moon flashed out, and there in the path stood the two stalwart men, with their weapons at the "charge," the bayonet points in very close proximity to the noses of our team. The driver stopped his horses just in time, and my companion, in the measured undertone in which this mystic communication is always made, proceeded to enunciate the watchword. There was a pause that was quite oppressive, till the sentry, instead of the welcome "Pass," startled us by saying "No, there is a mistake!" Of course there was nothing for it but that we should be conducted to the guard as suspicious persons, who had attempted to pass with a wrong watchword. Here it became necessary for my companion to descend and elaborately to vindicate his character by the

production of his papers seriatim. Then, and not till then, did the under-officer thaw, and communicate the information that our version of the watchword was wrong but by a single syllable. The patrol had blundered. I am certain the mistake was not ours—too much inconvenience was the sequence of an error for us to lapse into it through carelessness. At length we made a fresh start with the rectified watchword, which stood us in stead through several posts, and then came to an end as others had done. Two posts, however, consisting of single sentries, we contrived to satisfy without the watchword by the exhibition of legitimations, and drove on till interrupted by a challenge from a double post outside the village of Mondigny. The sentries demanded the watchword. There was no watchword forthcoming. "Why?" "Well, the road was horribly tantalising, every other mile there was a new watchword, and so difficult was it always to take up the new one that the attempt had to be given up." A grunt, in which there was assuredly incredulity, was the response, and then the sentries took post one on either side of the carriage, ported their arms, and gave the word to march. On reaching the guard the under-officer gradually became satisfied that my companion was neither a spy nor an unauthorised traveller, and gave us permission to proceed. The courier ventured to ask him for the watchword. Never shall I forget the look and accent of holy horror with which the honest fellow exclaimed "God forbid!" He would let us pass, to be dealt with by the tender mercies of the next post we should meet; but the watchword—that was his holy of holies, the palladium of his duty—not to be permitted unto King Wilhelm himself, unless he asked for it with the prescribed title to receive it. However, at Mondigny we had reached the left flank of the troops occupying

the valley of the Meuse and its vicinity, and had no more trouble from scrupulous sentries as we journeyed on to Rethel through the watches of the night. Some may imagine that it was an excess of caution thus to delay the progress of a courier travelling with important despatches to head-quarters. As the matter stood, the delay no doubt was vexatious, and did not answer any good purpose. But there would have been no delay had the courier been dressed in the distinctive uniform of his corps, and he had to take the inevitable consequences of not being so. I confess that, looking at the matter from a military point of view, I gloried in the rigorous discharge of their duties on the part of the trusty sentries, looking as they did neither to the right nor to the left, but straight forward along the definite line of their orders. For once that this stern strictness may be slightly detrimental, as in the case of the courier, my companion, it will ninety-nine times be of service in utterly preventing the movements of suspicious or treacherous persons. And it was part and parcel of the rigorous discipline which the journey illustrated, that my companion bore every interruption, not indeed without a grumble, but without a single remonstrance, accepting stoppage after stoppage as if it was a decree of fate, against which there was no use to rebel or even to get angry. Nay, although, as I say, human nature asserted itself, and he did grumble a little, yet there was not wanting a tone of real national pride, not to say exultation, in his comments on the state of discipline which was the cause of his inconveniences.

At Meaux, being bound for Versailles, we wended away to the south of Paris, using the Melun Chaussée for some distance, and then entering upon a labyrinth of side roads. Between Boissy St. Leger and Limeil, on the high ground overhanging the broad valley, the view

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of Paris first burst on my sight. One must have looked down on the beleaguered city from some one of the surrounding heights before the full impression of the reality of the siege, and of the passing strangeness of that reality, could actually come home to his mind. No reading, no imagining, could produce the profound effect. There lay, glistening in the peaceful afternoon sun, the great expanse of white houses, alternated with towers and spires. Notre Dame did not seem two miles distant; with my glass I could trace the course of the Seine through the city by the break in the bank of house tops. How peaceful everything seemed! What prevented to turn the horses' heads, and drive straight in to a dinner at Durand's, and a bed in the Grand Hotel? How difficult to realise the isolation among the white houses there of two millions of human beings, to know of the seething ferment that was ever going on in that dense, excitable mass of humanity, cut off as it was from all communication with the outer world.

Versailles. I found the Versailles that had been written about *usque ad nauseam* for the two months before, a dead stagnation with princes, correspondents, military bands, representatives of the demi-monde, and the errant wanderers of every country in Europe bobbing lazily on the surface. No fighting, no real news, hardly even gossip, unless scandal could by a stretch be called gossip; and of that, of the most pitifully trivial kind, the crop seemed plentiful enough. Undoubtedly, Versailles was the place at which to see notabilities. What a place would Versailles have been in those days for dear old Pepys! How he would have bowed to the ground as he sniffed the odour of exalted rank; how he would have scuttled about from one back-stairs to another, from the park to the table d'hôte and back again to the courtyard

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in front of the King's residence in the Prefecture. It struck me, even in the two days which was all the time I had to spare to Versailles, that it was not wholly destitute of modern Pepyses, modified from the great original but by circumstances.

As I sat writing in the Hôtel de France on the afternoon of my arrival in Versailles (I got there on the 16th November) I heard the mournful wail of funeral music out in the Place d'Armes. From out the Château, which was one huge hospital, there came winding a long procession, headed by a military band. Behind the band were three coffins, one covered by a black pall, the other two by white palls, and all borne aloft on trestles on the shoulders of soldiers. Behind the coffins marched the mourners, consisting of a band of officers, and the rear was brought up by a detachment of soldiers carrying their arms. To the dirge-like strains the procession slowly crossed the Place d'Armes, and wound through the streets to the cemetery. There, in a corner, was the great grave of the strangers, of those who are to be sojourners in a strange land till the sounding of the last trumpet. Not a few had already been buried below that raised parallelogram of red earth, for there were many sick and wounded in the vast halls of the palace; and the procession I witnessed was one of daily occurrence. Already tender hands had been at work among the red clay. Headstones had been set up and chrysanthemums planted. One grave, that of a lieutenant, was already railed in. Around the great open trench was collected a motley group—the front tiers composed of the street boys of Versailles. Behind them stood many women; in the background were soldiers of all arms, who had come down to the cemetery to pay the last mark of respect to their dead comrades. Slowly the procession wound up to the grave's

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mouth, and the band wheeling to one side continued to sound its dismal moanings. The mourners took post on either side, and the first coffin was moved up close to the grave. Two French gravediggers seized it, bore it forward, placed it across the ropes, and lowered it down to a third man in the bottom, who packed it away on one side. There was no near relative there to lower the head of the dead soldier into the grave; the real mourning for him was yet to come in some quiet village of the Fatherland, when the Feldpostbrief should reach the simple household announcing that its member with the army was to return no more. The other two coffins were lowered in like manner, the band still sounding its solemn strains, the street boys standing in unwonted silence and stillness, hushed into awe. Then came forward Herr Pastor, the chaplain of the division, in long black robes and casket-like cap, his hands clasped over his breast. The Germans have no set funeral service; it is left to the clergyman to make the most of the occasion over the open grave. Very much of the occasion did this most eloquent chaplain make. He spoke of the dead there as "our comrades, our friends, our brethren," of their death in a righteous cause, of their having met their fate as valiant soldiers fighting for their King and their Fatherland. Much more said he that would be out of place to quote, and then stepping forward to the brink of the grave, he strewed over the coffins a handful of mould, with the solemn "dust to dust, ashes to ashes," words so familiar to all, yet never heard without a new thrill. The grey-haired Oberst on the mound of earth doffed his helmet and bent his bare head. All followed his example. To the "Amen" of the Pastor, joined in by all, there succeeded a pause of dead silence, broken at length by the still mournful music of the band. Then the Oberst

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stooped, and, picking up a handful of mould, threw it on the coffins of his fellow soldiers lying dead there in the bottom of the deep grave. The other officers followed his example, and the soldiers standing all round threw in also their handfuls. The procession then reformed, and as soon as the gates of the cemetery were reached, the band struck up a merry march, as if to efface from recollection the memory of the mournful scene we had just witnessed.

It was arranged that, should I receive permission, I was to attach myself to the head-quarters of the Crown Prince of Saxony, who had commanded the Maas army ever since its formation after the battle of Gravelotte. The Prince had his head-quarters in Margency, a small village due north of Paris, and lying about two kilometres behind the well-known Montmorency. A journey round a section of the environment in the times I am writing of was a work of difficulty, and often of impossibility. Broken bridges, barricades, and stern sentries impeded the progress of the wayfarer; and if he was eager for a near cut, he had in many instances to make up his mind to chance being fired into by the French outposts. Anyone travelling between St. Germain and Argenteuil by the river route through Bezons had to face, not a chance, but a certainty of this dropping fire, and that not for a space across which he might gallop in a few minutes, but continuously for a distance of several miles. Discretion therefore prompted me on my journey to Margency to avoid the pontoon bridge below St. Germain, which led to the river, and to make a detour some distance down the Seine till I reached the railway bridge, a little beyond Le Mesnil. There was something almost oppressive in the utter solitude of the long drive through the forest of St. Germain. In the very heart of war as the forest was, the dead leaves

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in its drives were not rustled by the tread of a single living thing. One might have imagined oneself traversing the New Forest, instead of driving through a spot that was within, or at all events barely without, the range of the guns of Mont Valérien. One of my most forcible early impressions of the theatre of war around Metz had been the comparative invisibility of the beleaguering force. It was the same here. We know roughly how many thousand Germans there stood around Paris, ever ready for action when the alarm was given. But where were they? would have been the natural question for one who does not know how compactly the Germans stow, and what little show their hosts make when there is no occasion for demonstration. The country all round is chequered with villages and châteaux, in the vicinity of which was visible an occasional spiked helmet. But let the alarm have sounded, and see what a dense clump of spiked helmets every village and château would have given up. The railway bridge at Mesnil was not the most eligible conceivable means of crossing a river; but it served its turn. What between mud, rails, sleepers, and deep holes, the springs of a carriage had need to be very tough indeed, and the horses dragging it need to be very strong. One, however, was not disposed to be over critical when he reflected how lucky it was that this means of crossing was left to him at all. For not 200 yards down stream were visible the shattered ruins of the road bridge. What a deal of pains the French engineers must have expended in utterly smashing up this structure. Hardly one stone had been left upon another. The shattered stumps of the piers stuck up out of the troubled waters, a swirling rapid in which marked where the rest of the structure lay in a rough heap on the bottom. It is inscrutable that

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a little of the assiduity developed in the destruction of this bridge should not have been diverted towards rendering impassable the railway bridge, which now, for all practical purposes, supplied its place.

Mont Valérien is the Old Man of the Sea to the journeyer around this side of Paris. It is the most ubiquitous eminence imaginable. At St. Germain it is due east of you, and you think if you go a long way north, that you must presently leave it behind. But wherever you go there he rears his head, to all appearance ever in your path. After passing Argenteuil, however, I did contrive to give him a little the go by; but it was only in escaping from Scylla to fall into Charybdis. A little beyond Argenteuil my coachman turned boldly on the road, in a south-easterly direction, and passed on his left the village of St. Gratien, with a confidence which would have impressed the most distrustful that the man knew the road quite familiarly. At Epinay I was therefore greatly surprised to find us brought up all standing by a formidable entrenchment, beyond which there was no passing. From what the courteous officer who had charge of the post told me, I could not feel any great regret that we were thus brought to a halt, seeing that, as it was, we were all too close to the guns of the crown work of St. Briche to be pleasant, that fortification having a gay and festive habit of throwing shells into St. Gratien, which was considerably in our rear. Returning and passing through St. Gratien, Soisy was presently reached, where in a pleasant château were the head-quarters of the Fourth Army Corps, and a few kilometres further to the north-west I found the head-quarters of the Prince of Saxony, comfortably established in Margency. I have not words to express my sense of the frank and prompt heartiness with which my request for permission to be at-

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tached to the Prince's staff was acceded to. Quarters were at once assigned to me, cramped as the occupants of the place were for room, and General von Schlotheim, the chief of the staff of the Maas army, was good enough to place at my disposal any information which I required. Nothing could be imagined more dissimilar than the head-quarters of the two armies which made up the besieging force around Paris. At Versailles there was royal state and all the pomp and circumstance which the presence of Royalty implies. There was the King's staff, with princes innumerable; and there was the Crown Prince's staff, with ever so many more princes. There was a large town. There were strangers of all countries, of all classes, and with all sorts of business—not a few with no business at all. Versailles was the centre of political as well as military news, and of the deliberations and gossip which tidings of both kinds generate. It was dull enough, no doubt, to any one fond of action, but then it presented lots of alteratives to dulness. There was the casino, there were the cafés; to men of the Jeames de la Pluche turn of mind, there was the great dining-room of the Hôtel des Réservoirs, where Excellencies and Serene Highnesses, and other kindred salt of the earth, did so abound, that a couple of hours' inhalation of its atmosphere might have made an imaginative Titmouse believe for the time being that he, too, must surely have some handle to his name. There were shops in Versailles. I met a gentleman who had got a dress coat built in the place. There was champagne; little dinners of a recherché (and expensive) character were possible, and, in short, there was in Versailles a large infusion of rosewater in the inevitably bitter decoction, the label on which is horrid war.

Every item to which I have referred as characteristic

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of Versailles was conspicuous by its absence at Margency. The Crown Prince of Saxony's staff was of modest size, and there was no sensational background to the quiet-toned picture in the way of multitudinous princes. It comprised about twenty-five officers, some of whom were Saxon, the remainder Prussian and Würtemberger. The staff dwelt together in a pleasant fraternal manner in the big château and in a few smaller residences in the environs of the village. There was but one table kept—that of his Royal Highness. The stranger coming to Margency without the good fortune of establishing relations with the staff would have found himself in very barren quarters indeed. A sign board afforded circumstantial evidence that there had been once an auberge in the place, but it was now occupied by a marketender, whose stock was at a very low ebb, and did not appear likely to be speedily replenished. Except that the village had no burnt houses, and that its gables were not smashed by shells and pierced with loop-holes, it reminded me forcibly of our deadly-lively dwelling-places around Metz. But its environs were beautiful, and had sustained very little injury at the hands of the troops. The gardens were still full of fruit, and a salad, an article that could not be achieved within a radius of ten miles of Metz for weeks before the capitulation, was to be got with the utmost ease. Small as Margency was, the military occupants seemed determined to make the most of it in the eyes of the world. Imitating the Parisians, they had rechristened the streets and had given names to alleys that were nameless under the French régime. A practical people, the Germans had gone largely into utility in their nomenclature. Thus, we had "Ingenieur-street," where the engineers of the staff resided; "Feldpost-street," which explains itself; "Telegraph-street," where were the head-

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quarters of the field telegraph train, and so on. "Albert-street" was the only departure from utilitarianism.

In the afternoon of the day of my arrival in Margency, a staff officer of engineers was good enough to be my guide to an eminence in the front, from which there was an excellent view of the positions of the besieged and the besiegers, all round the north-western segment of the operations. The ride was a very beautiful one. Skirting Montmorency and Soisy, we came upon the beautiful sheet of water lying to the west of Enghien-les-Bains—surrounded with its arabesque fencing, and with the weeping willows on the lawns of the châteaux, trailing their branches in the pellucid lake. The many hotels surrounding the water—pleasant places so well known to visitors to Paris—were now, without exception, occupied by troops, and the white-capped cook had resigned his office. The soldiers were enjoying their Sunday afternoon leisure in rowing about the lake in the pleasure boats, sharing the water amicably with the swans, which were not discerning enough to recognise in them the enemies of France. The largest of the many villas near the margin of the lake belongs to the Princess Mathilde Demidoff, and in accordance with orders from King Wilhelm, the château and grounds had been carefully respected by his soldiers. But subsequently the necessities of war interfered with this immunity, and on the night of the sortie on Epinay of the 30th November, the Château Demidoff had to be utilised as a lazarette. Bearing to the right through St. Gratien we crossed the road from Sannois to Epinay, and presently commenced the ascent of Mont d'Orgimont, the summit of which was our destination. When we reached the top, what a splendid panorama lay spread out before us! Almost at our feet flowed the Seine, on its way from the bend at St. Denis down to the other bend at

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St. Germain. But yesterday I had crossed the peninsula held by the Germans, now I looked down on a peninsula held by the French. Looking due south I could track the Seine as it emerged between Mont Valérien and the Bois de Boulogne. The latter, or such of it as might have been left, lay too low to show distinctively; the former asserted itself right boldly against the horizon, with its two great barracks on the summit, and the white puffs of smoke wreathing about its crest as its batteries sent shot after shot across in the direction of St. Germain. By the villages on its banks—Puteaux, Courbevoie, Asnières, and St. Ouen, one could trace the course of the stream till it ran into the white houses and sombre groves of St. Denis, and then it made the bend, and came down towards us almost straight. On one side of the stream on the left was Epinay, not the pleasantest post in the world when La Briche happened to be in a bad humour. Down at our right lay Argenteuil, which had already been the victim of very rough usage from the French guns in what I may call the inner peninsula. From where I stood I could see no fewer than four destroyed bridges that had once spanned the Seine. The nearest was the railway bridge on the Argenteuil link of the Northern line—it lay now in the bottom of the river. Lower down was the bridge of Argenteuil, with four arches ruined. Across the two nearest to Argenteuil there stretched a slender tracery which betokened that the engineers had been at work endeavouring to repair them, but the operations were suspended. Lower down still was the Bridge of Bezons, shattered almost to pieces; and nearer the bend towards St. Germain there was visible the railway bridge on the line leading to Rouen. Looking across the peninsula it was possible, with a good glass, to make out the *enceinte* of Paris on the Monceaux and Batignolles face, and then

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beyond lay the beleaguered city, the horizon closed in by the Mamelon of Montmartre, with the towers of Notre-Dame on our right of it; then the great mass of the Pantheon; and passing over a multitude of domes and spires, the Arc de Triomphe far away on the right. The afternoon sun threw its bright rays on the glittering summits and on the white houses. How difficult it was to realise the idea that the city lying there so quiet and smiling was girt by hostile troops and full of fighting men!

To come now to the peninsula lying more immediately before us. Almost exactly in its centre was the village of Gennevilliers—no doubt well defended by entrenchments, barricades, and stockades, but none of these were visible from our position. Through the glass I could see a sentry at intervals where the roads quit it—for the rest it might have been a deserted village. On its left front, and almost close to the Seine, was a small French earthwork, designed probably for a single battery. The earthwork seemed nearly if not altogether completed, but no guns were in position, and the reason was not far to seek. The Germans were both capable of preventing the guns from being got into position, and of making the place untenable were the guns already there. Near the right—I speak always of our right and left—of Gennevilliers was a much larger work, with a couple of bastions, and evidently designed, when complete, to be a very formidable affair. But it was not nearly so far forward as the smaller work I have just spoken of, and the same cause which had arrested the progress of the one prevented the other also from being further proceeded with. The earthwork lay there clumsy and nearly shapeless, without a pioneer or a gun near it. In front of Courbevoie was another French battery, on which the guns were actually mounted, and long range pieces they were too, for they

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had thrown projectiles across the peninsula on to the side of the river on which is Mont d'Orgimont—a range of 8,500 paces. Yet another and nearer battery was before Charlebourg, mounted with guns of a smaller calibre. This was the battery that had the special animosity against Argenteuil. And to conclude the peninsular defences, so far as they were visible, there was a battery close behind Nanterre, under the shadow of Mont Valérien—a battery that in certain contingencies I could imagine not a little troublesome.

Bang! whiz-z-z-z, came the long whistle of a big shell through the air. It struck and burst behind a lower eminence about 150 yards to the east of where I stood. Yet another, and another, and another. The shells came from the big battery at St. Ouen right across the peninsula. Not a shell came nearer us in our snug concealment in the observatory on the summit; the gunners of St. Ouen had never yet got quite that length. The mark was a battery emplacement on the lower eminence, on which were already mounted more than one gun of great apparent size, and it was evident the French imagined a position so commanding was being strengthened by working parties and room made for more guns. I wonder whether they would have fired so freely had they known that there was not a man within three hundred yards of the hillock, and that the threatening-looking big guns were wooden "quakers" neatly constructed by the pioneers. The battery stood with its back to a big bank of wood, with a church steeple on one side of it and a large white château on the other. It mounted somewhere about twenty guns, which were 48-pounders, and were believed to be naval guns. Their range was estimated at 7,300 paces.

One may write now freely of the forepost line of the

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Maas army, a large section of which was visible to us from the top of Mont d'Orgimont. All the way from Chaton on the west to Epinay on the east the Seine formed the narrow boundary line between besiegers and besieged. At Epinay the forts of St. Denis compelled the abandonment of this natural line of demarcation, and the German forepost cordon struck away from the river across the plain in the segment of a circle, villages, châteaux, and detached houses being carefully utilised as covers for the strong *replis* which formed the supports of the venturesome *Feldwachen* projected forward a little distance into the plain. The line, quitting Epinay, rested first on the village of Ormesson, then on the hamlet of La Barre, and attained its most northerly point at the Château of La Chevrette, in front of the village of Deuil. Thence it struck eastward with but very little cover to the southern extremity of the village of Montmagny, with a debateable ground in front consisting of a portion of the village of Villanteneuse, which was scarcely perceptibly a distinct village from Montmagny. This debateable ground was wont to be taken up at night by a non-commissioned officer's command, while the French held the rest of the village, and the close proximity gave occasion sometimes to fighting, sometimes to fraternisation, as the spirit moved. Skirting the Paris-ward base of the height of Pierrefitte, otherwise known as Richebourg, the line next touched the village of Pierrefitte on the great northern chaussée, and from Pierefitte audaciously struck south-eastward into Stains, which is so close under the guns of the double crown work of Fort du Nord, that the gunners could be plainly seen with the naked eye, going about their business on the ramparts. Pierrefitte is only a little further distant, not above a mile and a quarter from the town of St. Denis behind the fortifications, and both villages must

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be rebuilt before they will lose the traces of their proximity during the months of the siege, when hardly a day passed that St. Denis did not shell them with more or less acrimony. East of Stains the forepost line had no cover till it reached the Mill of Dugny, whence it passed athwart the front of the village of Dugny, and so following the road, the ditch of which gave some cover to the *Feldwachen*, into the village of Le Bourget. Of the latter section of the line, as well as of its prolongation on the eastern side of the environment, further details will be found on a subsequent page. I am writing now chiefly of so much of it as was visible from the top of Mont d'Orgimont. Had the French known how sedulously that eminence was used for purposes of observation, their artillery might have been more attentive to it than was the case.

The Maas army, as it was termed from the region in which on its formation after Gravelotte it was intended to operate, consisted when organised, and for some time after taking up its position before Paris, of three complete army corps, the 4th (Saxon province), under the command of General von Alvensleben; the Guards (Prussian), commanded by Prince August of Würtemberg; and the 12th (Royal Saxon), whose chief was Prince George of Saxony, the younger brother of the Crown Prince. The latter had commanded the army corps contributed by his father's subjects until the Maas army was formed, and Prince George had then commanded one of its two divisions (the 24th). After the siege was begun there had been added to the Maas army the Würtemberg contingent, consisting of one division under the command of General von Obernitz. It was by far the largest section of the environment which it fell to this Maas army so constituted to maintain. It kept the ground on the north, the east, and the south-east, all the way from

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the Seine nearly to the Seine, from Sartrouville on the west round to Bonneuil-sur-Marne at the bottom of the horse-shoe, and occasionally with an extended front approaching still nearer to the Seine. The 4th Army Corps, with its head-quarters in Soisy, had the section on the right to hold, as task of comparative ease because of the natural obstruction which the river offered to an *Ausfall* along almost the whole of its front. It was generally in Montmorency that its left flank touched, and indeed blended with the right of the Guards. These splendid soldiers, with their head-quarters in Gonesse, kept firm and true the section of environment from Montmorency as far east as Aulnay, although there were times when the Guards had to extend to their left as far as Sevran, and even to garrison Livry when the Saxons had to close their front to make a denser obstruction to the enemy. On the other hand there were occasions when the Guards had to stand closer and closer and touch shoulder to shoulder, and then the trim men of the Royal Saxon Corps were to be seen in the wrecked skeleton-houses of Aulnay. Give and take was the motto, so long as there were no gaps uncovered by men with needle-guns in their hands. On the left of the Guards lay the Royal Saxons, the 12th Army Corps. Prince George had his head-quarters in Le Vert Galant, a village in the rear of Livry, and the kindly men of Saxonland confronted Forts Rosny and Nogent, and before the great sortie of the 2nd December crossed the Marne, and held Champs and Villiers. South of them lay the Würtembergers with General Obernitz's head-quarters first in Le Peple, afterwards in Malnoue, extending their front through Champigny of the graves and away south by Chennevieres and Ormesson, as far as Bonneuil, and sometimes further. When the 2nd Corps came in on their left and took

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part of their ground in that direction, then the Würtemberger kepi came to be seen in Villiers, Noisy-le-Grand, and Champs, the right flank of the division touching the Saxon left at the river. Give and take was the motto here too, and there were no hard and fast lines. The arduousness of the duty, and the assiduous efforts to equalise it by interchanges of reliefs, made "dislocations" very frequent, and if you saw a regiment one day, it might be in Villiers, and coming back the next should inquire for it, you might be told by men not only of a different regiment, but of a different corps and a different nationality, that it had packed up and shifted to quarters half-a-dozen miles in the rear.

Sights, incidents, and places connected with the prosecution of the siege naturally engrossed the largest share of interest; but there came occasional lulls, fitful always and often short, when one had leisure to realise the wealth of historical and social-historical associations of which there is so great a profuseness on the north side of Paris. St. Denis, Montmorency, Aubervilliers, Argenteuil—there is not a name that is not eloquent of great and stirring memories. Let us take one of those quiet days, when the foreposts are lazily exchanging shots in the crisp air of the morning—now and then a streak of fire and then a jet of smoke flashing out from the steep side of Mont Valérien—and climb in fancy to the top of the Hill of Montmorency, whence we command the country round about for miles in every direction. In that white village out there in the middle of the peninsula—Gennevilliers is its name—there died some hundred and twenty years ago a lady you may have heard of—one Mdlle. de Launay. In Colombes, to the right, Rollin composed his "Histoire Ancienne," and Bossuet pronounced that magnificent funeral oration over the coffin of Henrietta Maria,

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the young daughter of Henri Quatre, which serves as a pattern for many a man in the present day that would feel insulted if you questioned his claim to originality. That white house among the trees, between Colombes and Courbevoie—it has the battery for a background—is called la Garenne; it was the country house of the famous physician Comisart. Bring your eye round now to the shattered bridge of Argenteuil nearer you to the westward. There are other ruins thereabout than the bridge. See you that heap of stones among the trees at the bottom of the island? That is all that is left of the once famous Maison-Joli, the habitation of Watelet, whither about the middle of last century were wont to flock the litterateurs of Paris and the strangers of distinction who visited the capital. You may read not a little about the place in the Mémoires of Morellet and Suard—how it was the rival of Madame Necker's Château at St. Ouen, and of the mansion of Madame Helvetius at Auteuil.

Cross the stream with your eye, and it catches the roofs of the houses in the town of Argenteuil—roofs with holes in them in places, made by the shells from the battery over the way. If you ask a typical Parisian for what Argenteuil is famous, he will reply, "For the quantity rather than the quality of its wine." But Argenteuil has other claims to notice than its fecundity in the juice of the grape. There was a nunnery here once—if all tales are true it was an ugly scandal that caused it to be wound up—which had for one of its abbesses Theodrada, the daughter of Charlemagne, and for another the Eloise of whom our own Pope has sung. The church of Argenteuil is still to the fore. Under that long dead-coloured roof there is a relic, of which, were I a Catholic, I should speak with bated breath. Argenteuil shares, with Treves, Fribourg, and a score of other places for aught I know,

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the repute of having in its church a piece of the seamless coat of our Lord—that garment of which Matthew of Westminster wrote, "Mater ejus fecerat ei, et crevit ipso crescendo." It is here now in a great massive chest of bronze, designed by Cahier in the 12th century style, after a series of adventures before which those of the famous Scottish "Stone of Destiny" fade away into tameness, resting quietly here within range of the shells, after having escaped the machinations of Turks and Huguenots, Saracens and Romans, Persians and Normans, after having been buried in a garden and its whereabouts miraculously revealed to a nun in a dream, and after having lain for a few centuries, more or less, in a crypt in a city of Galatia. Look over the slates of Argenteuil at that house among the trees, by the road between Argenteuil and Bezons; that is the Château of Marais, and it was there that Mirabeau dwelt during the stormy times of the Revolution. Further on, and close to the shattered bridge of Bezons, you come upon an old memory in that smaller dwelling by the water side. This was the château of Marshal Bezons, he who took Landau in 1713.

If we look further westward we shall get confused by distances, so let us turn sharp round and look south-south-east toward St. Ouen. Here, 500 years ago, were the head-quarters of the order of the Knights of the Star, whose emblem was a star with the mystic legend, "Monstrant regibus astra viam." Here Madame de Pompadour had a château. It was in this château that Louis XVIII. halted irresolutely on his way to Paris in May, 1814, and to it came Talleyrand at dead of night with the draft of the proclamation, to consent to the terms of which he found it so hard to persuade the conscientious but beetle-headed monarch. The château of

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the Neckers, that once brilliant resort, is now partly in ruins; it may indeed be wholly destroyed, for the battery seems very near its site. Looking over St. Denis you can just see the spire of Aubervilliers or "The Virtues." It was as the Allies reached this spot on their march to Paris after Waterloo, stretched out in a weakened and elongated line, that Napoleon, eating out his heart in Malmaison, clutched at the idea that it was still possible to crush them by a desperate stroke. What an unquenchable energy the man had, how loath to believe that all was lost! Who will not own that there was something grand in the humility of his offer to make the attempt, not as Emperor, but as General, with the half-piteous, half-comical rider, that if he did not succeed he would forthwith take himself off to the United States?

And now we come to St. Denis. How the single word flashes out, as it were, with the limelight along the whole history of France! As one utters it he seems to hear the old war-cry, "Montjoie St. Denis!" so ready on the lips of the chivalry of France—he seems to see the oriflamme waving in the breeze of the battlefield. The last time they took the oriflamme out of the Cathedral was for Agincourt—would it do the men of Paris any service to revive the old institution, and bear it before them in their next sortie? Who cares to know that the old stones were first piled together by Catulla, knocked about by Sigebert, replaced by Chilperic, and dressed and squared by Dagobert? There is no sense of reality about such details as these; but, in the veritable history of the Cathedral, there is surely plenty. Why, if these Chassepots and cannon would only allow you, you might look on the receptacles that contain the dust of dynasty after dynasty of French monarchs. Surely there is reality enough about coffins. You might begin at the com-

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mencement, with the baby of Chilperic and Fredegonde, whose body was placed here in 580, and work systematically down, through the Merovingian dynasty, the Carlovingian dynasty, the Capets, the Bourbons, and the Orleans people. You would find no Napoleons in St. Denis. We shall come to the tomb of some of them by and by, in a more modern place, cheek by jowl with other ex-royalties. It seems as if the old building would have none of the parvenus. The First Napoleon built himself a splendid vault there, and gave out by Imperial decree that "St. Denis was to be the place of sepulture of the Napoleonic dynasty," setting about repairing the place, as was his energetic wont, after the ravages of the Revolutionists. But the stones were more obstinate than the Napoleons. Twice the repairs fell in with a crash of remonstrance, and the late man gave up the task, and devoted himself to the embellishment of the interior. It was the merest luck in the world that the bones of the kings were not made inextricable "pie" of. When in 1793 Barrere proposed in the Convention to celebrate the anniversary of the 10th of August by smashing the monuments and tombs of the Kings, he found enthusiastic supporters. When the gay and festive iconoclasts had polished off the marble, they took to the demolition of the coffins, with all the heartier good will, that the lead was found to make very good bullets. But for the sagacious old Benedictine Father Poirier, the dust of St. Louis might have been jumbled with the bones of Charles Martel, and the Capets and Bourbons got muddled irretrievably. But Poirier was equal to the hour —quite a prototype of Dean Stanley. He had no difficulty, by their royal robes, in distinguishing Henry the Second and Catherine de Medicis. He found Henri Quatre "in a perfect state of preservation," with his moustache

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neatly curled, and the mark quite plain of the knife of Ravaillac. Louis the Fourteenth was recognisable easily by "the traits of his visage," and one is not surprised to hear that Louis the Fifteenth was found reduced to a nasty mass of semiliquid putrefaction.

One is loath to leave off gossiping about St. Denis, even at the risk of wearying the reader. Here it was that Joan of Arc, after her wound, laid down her sword and deposited her armour. How often has the open space outside the carved arches of the door of the old cathedral echoed to the shout of the multitude, "Le Roi est mort, vive le Roi!" when a dead king of France had been consigned to the grave of his fathers. I suppose the Gardes Mobiles are in the old cathedral now, using it as a barracks. There is less to wreck about it now, if they are, than before 1793. Before then St. Denis might have set up a score of ordinary cathedrals in the way of relics. It could boast of three bodies—rather a small share—out of the eleven thousand virgin martyrs of Cologne; of the whole of St. Denis, and another odd saint or two; of the ears of the Virgin, set in fleur de lis of gold; of the head of St. Hilaire; of the rim of the gridiron on which St. Laurent was roasted; of a bone of the prophet Isaiah; of the sword of St. Louis, that he wore on his campaign in the Holy Land; of a thorn from the crown of torture; Charlemagne's sword and spurs; Dagobert's bronze chair; the sword of Joan of Arc; the old Royal crown and sceptre; and lots of other "possibles" of the Wardour-street order. All these the merry men of the First Revolution scattered to the winds. But the Cathedral of St. Denis is still a cathedral. The Abbey, once so rich that during a famine it kept alive a large proportion of the inhabitants of Paris, has now lost even its name. Madame de Maintenon diverted

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a respectable slice of its revenues, in the shape of 100,000 francs of annual rent, and the First Napoleon finished the work by rebuilding the old house, and devoting it as a *pensionnat* for the education of a number of children, the offspring of members of the Legion of Honour. The place is now known by the name of the "Maison de la Légion d'Honneur." In St. Denis there is one English association that occurs at the moment. In La Paroisse, as the chapel of an ancient Carmelite convent is called, in the Rue de la Briche, as you go out to the fort of the same name, there lie the remains of Henrietta of England.

Look down at these ridges at your feet, dotted all over with villas and châteaux, that break the fall from the height on which we stand into the flat plain, bounded by the silvery Seine. This congeries of residences is Montmorency, a name recalling memories of, perhaps, the greatest family that France ever knew. It was from this place that the Montmorencys took their title. Within sight of his ancestral home, Anne de Montmorency, the hero of a race of heroes, after a career rivalling that of Bayard, fell on the field of St. Denis by the hand of Robert Stuart, slaying his slayer, as he died, with a last parting blow with the pommel of his sword. The "first Christian barons," as the Montmorencys were called, have no longer any foothold in this beautiful valley, which once they owned from hill to hill; not a stone of their original mansion near the Church now remains. But the people will not let die the old glorious name. Effort after effort has been made, without avail, to efface its memory by changing the appellation of the locality. One Louis made a decree that it should be thenceforth known as Enghien, and another confirmed it. The revolutionists tried their best to effect yet another change.

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They rechristened the place Emile, moved thereunto by another association to which I shall presently allude. But it was all of no use: to this day the place is universally known by the name of Montmorency. Withdraw your mind from dwelling on the fights and high-handed statecraft of the Montmorencys, constables, barons, dukes, and what not, and look down at your feet on this little sequestered house on the fringe of the forest just outside the town of Montmorency. About a hundred years ago there came to dwell in this quiet cottage a man great in a sense, greater than all the Montmorencys —Jean Jacques Rousseau. It was professedly to a hermitage that this great man, so full of paltry littlenesses, came, on the invitation of Madame d'Epinay. Had he lived the life of a hermit it would have been better for his own reputation and for the peacefulness of that pleasant coterie of which the valley of Montmorency was the centre; or had he not been a cynic savage with a dash of lust—a double of Swift—he might have lived and died happily in the society he found ready to welcome him, comprising as it did Grimm, the graceful and spirited historian; the poet St. Lambert, none the less deserving the title of the "gentleman of the pen and the sword" because our Horace Walpole, in that sour way of his, called him a pretentious and lackadaisical jackanapes; the two sisters, Mesdames d'Houdetot and d'Epinay, and others, of whom it were tedious to write. But the cynic philosopher came like the apple of discord. He loved one sister and then abused her like a brute; he transferred his love, such as it was, to the other, who bore with his folly for the sake of his genius; then he packed up bag and baggage, and came across the slope to this other house further on the right —the cottage of Montlouis. It is, however, his first

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residence which is the original "Hermitage"—so long a shrine of idolatry with the French Republicans. If you, too, are a worshipper of Rousseau, you had better spare your feelings by refraining from making a pilgrimage to the Hermitage. There came to it after Rousseau left it Grétry, the famous composer, and Grétry shares with Rousseau the memorial trophies of the Hermitage. Indeed, Grétry has the bigger half of them, for he has a bust on the front with bas reliefs, and a laudatory inscription; and Rousseau is but commemorated by a painted notice calling attention to his chestnut tree, which, by the way, is very rotten. You can buy the whole concern if you like; for there is a notice nailed on the chestnut tree, "This house to sell or let;" and the Second Empire has clapped an unpoetical number on it; so that the other name of the Hermitage is 47, Rue de St. Brice. Inside it is a wreck, and it is the habitation presently of a Corporalschaft of the 96th Regiment of Prussian infantry. Rousseau ended that unsociable discontented life of his at Ermenonville, a village far away to the east, and we are told when the Prussians under Blücher came on to Paris, in 1814, hosts of them made pilgrimages to the sage's tomb. The honest Teutons now in the Hermitage don't appear to know anything about the philosopher of Geneva, and, if firewood runs scarce, will probably burn his chestnut tree. If you know Paris well, sundry other memories of Montmorency will probably occur to you, more closely connected with your physical being than those to which I have been alluding. In peace time the hotels of Montmorency are justly celebrated for their cuisine. "Le Cheval Blanc" is quite an historical hostelry. The Ledrus have been the proprietors of it for three generations; the keen air gives one an appetite, and a sight of the well-appointed *salle à manger* would

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be right pleasant. Alas! now all that is left to the fore of "Le Cheval Blanc" is the walls and the sign. That sign, though, must not be passed over in the disappointment of finding Under-officer Schmidt sitting where Madame Ledru, the smiling, was wont to sit. That white horse up there on the creaking sign-board was painted by the great Gerard, in liquidation of a score of 1,800 francs, which he and a couple of gay and festive friends had run up with Ledru the second in about three days. If you are an epicure, don't turn your back on Montmorency and refuse to take interest in yet another cuisine association. This villa near the church was the retreat of the famous Véry, the

"César de la béchamel,
L'Alexandre du Rosbif,"

who came out here in the evening of his days, like De Fontaine's rat into the cheese. The Vérys now, however, have a habitation in Eaubonne, in a château adjacent to that occupied by the descendant of Mirabeau. Other circumstances besides misfortune often make strange bedfellows. It was in Eaubonne where Saint Lambert lived to be conveniently near to Madame d'Houdetot, whose château was in Sannois.

Nearer Mont d'Orgimont than Montmorency is Enghien-les-Bains, with its lake and its sulphur springs. The taps of the *thermes* have been knocked out of order by the shells, and as you pass you smell the sulphur strongly. The tragedian Talma died in this house close to the baths. The French have made it a hotel, and the other day their shells made it a skeleton. The road to the left leads to Epinay. It is a very pretty spot, and old Clovis was a sensible man to choose it as his country residence. His example was followed by Dagobert (who was not lucky in Epinay, for there he caught the

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dysentery, of which he died), by Gabrielle d'Estrées, and by Lacépède, artist, naturalist, and President of the First Legislature in 1791. As we have followed the left road leading to Epinay, it is only fair that we turn right for one moment into St. Gratien, to recall the memory of such a soldier as France would to-day be right glad of. To this quiet retreat came the great soldier of fortune, Marshal Catinat, declining titles, honours, and orders, and cultivating a modest garden like a modern Cincinnatus. It is a beautiful spot, and the soldier philosopher could have no more congenial home for his meditations. Turn your back now on St. Denis, and Paris, and Montmorency, and everything on which you have been previously gazing, and cast your eye northward over Margency and Montlignon, to that church spire which rises over the trees that crop out from the forest into the valley. That is the church spire of the village of Napoleon St. Leu, a place whose associations are more recent, but certainly not less interesting than those of any spot all round the horizon. On the slope above the village, close to where there now stands the beautiful residence of Lady Ashburton, there once stood a much larger château. In the year 1814 this château was inhabited by a queen without a throne, for she was the wife of a monarch who had abdicated—and by her two sons, the elder of whom was about eight years of age. The Prussians and the Russians were in Paris. Napoleon was already an exile in Elba. This queen's château, undoubted Bonapartist as the lady was, somehow came to be looked upon as neutral ground. The coterie in her drawing-rooms was sufficiently enticing. She herself was a brilliant and beautiful woman. The authoress of "Corinne," as she fondled the boys, sparkled out ever and anon with some flash of wit. Mole, Lava-

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lette, Flahaut, and Garnerey the painter, were constant visitors. With the sour looks of the Parisians it was dull times for the conquerors, and the great men among them were right glad to mix in the sparkling society that was open to them on the neutral ground in the Château of St. Leu. Hither came once and again the Emperor Alexander, with his minister Pozzo di Borgo. Blücher cared more for a fight than a conversazione, but Prince Augustus of Prussia would look in, and sometimes there came with him a slip of a lad, in a lieutenant's uniform, and with the down not yet budded on his lip. This lad was then the younger son of the monarch of a second-rate State. The down came, and gave place to the heavy blonde moustache. The blonde is now snow-white, and it hangs over the lip of one whose title to-day is Wilhelm, Emperor of Germany, and who has come to revive early memories at the head of half a million of men. The mistress of the pleasant château was Hortense, daughter of the Empress Josephine by her first marriage, wife of Louis Napoleon, that Bonaparte who preferred Lausanne and his library to the throne of Holland. The elder of the two boys I speak of bore, too, the name of Louis. A year after the time of which I write, his great uncle was showing him, in the absence of the King of Rome, to the cheering crowds of Paris from the balcony of the Tuileries. After years of exile and imprisonment, the people of Paris saw the same face again. The boy of St. Leu was he who, till the other day, was Napoleon III., Emperor of the French.

The Germans lie between St. Leu and hot Republican Paris, lusting to eradicate the vestiges of the Empire and the Napoleons. The prefix which the name of St. Leu got some twenty years ago still belongs to it without question, but it may be taken for granted that the prefix

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will go with the dynasty. I hope that when the Republicans sally forth to paint out the "Napoleon," they will respect the tomb of the Napoleons behind the altar of the Church. The ashes of this strange family have had as many vicissitudes as its members. The dust of the great Emperor has been excavated from below the willow tree in the shadow of St. Helena's rock. Of the rest of the family it may well be said—

"Their graves are severed far and wide,
By mountain, stream, and sea."

There are four Napoleons buried here in the Church of St. Leu—Napoleon Charles, the eldest son of Louis and Hortense, who died at the age of five; Napoleon Louis, Duke of Berg, then second son, who died in Italy in 1831; Louis himself, brought to St. Leu from Livorni, where he died in 1847; and the father of all the stock, old Charles Marie Napoleon of Corsica, who died at Montpellier in 1785. The last was the first of the Napoleons to lie in St. Leu; his son, the King of Holland, had his ashes transferred from Montpellier to a mausoleum in the park of the Château of St. Leu. When the little Prince Royal of Holland died he was buried beside his grandfather. But after the second restoration the château passed into the hands of the Duke of Bourbon, who disliked the presence in his park of the ashes of the relatives of him at whose instance the Duke of Enghien was shot. So he had them dug up, but considerately interposed no obstacle in the way of the curé when that worthy man would find a refuge for the outcasts in the vaults of the church—the burial-place of the Montmorencys. When Napoleon the Third got warm on the Imperial throne he had the church rebuilt at great expense, and a special vault constructed for the remains of the four members of the family who were already buried

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in St. Leu, issuing at the same time a decree that this vault was thenceforth to be regarded as the burial-place of the dynasty. You may see the monument in the recess behind the altar—three saints, one of whom is "Saint Napoleon," painted above a big concern of white marble, crowned by a life-size statue of Louis, the sensible man who abdicated; and having niches in its front, containing busts of the other three occupants of the vault. The Emperor and Empress presided with great state at the inauguration of the new edifice in 1853. Strangely enough that Duke of Bourbon, the last of the Condés, who would not give the ashes of the Napoleons sleeping room in his park, came in the end to mingle his own with theirs. No doubt he was much disgusted at the event of 1830. One morning in August of that year he was found hanging against the window of his bed-room. Somebody had gone about the business of strangulation very systematically, and the two white neckcloths hanged him most effectually. He was buried in the Church of St. Leu, and you may see through the trees the column which the Legitimists erected to his memory in the park. It has engraved on it the inscription, "Hîc cecidit," which is a misstatement. Had he fallen it might have been the better for him; but the neckcloths and the espagnolette held fast and prevented him. The park is now broken up, and the château razed to the ground. It is said that some of our countrymen, when the bricks and mortar were being sold in lots, speculated in the lot containing the fatal window, and that they did a good stroke of business by selling as memorials at least four "original windows."

There were several considerable outbursts of firing during the night between November 20th and 21st, chiefly from Mont Valérien; but the purport of these ebullitions,

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if there was, indeed, any purport in them, was not apparent. On the foreposts down in the mist there went on a desultory dropping fire entirely from the French side. As the shooting men could not have seen an object a hundred yards before them, they must either have been working off superfluous energy, or emptying their rifles of charges which the night air had damped. In the absence of any occurrence of interest at headquarters, it struck me that a visit to the scene of the last hard fighting on the north side, the village of Le Bourget, might furnish matter likely to be of interest, and in the afternoon, therefore, I started in that direction. My way lay through Montmorency and St. Brice to Sarcelles, at which village I obtained information as to the whereabouts of the Queen Elizabeth Regiment, with some of the officers of which gallant regiment I had already an acquaintance, and to whom I trusted, as the regiment had borne the brunt of the fight at Le Bourget, for a reliable cicerone to the scene of the action. The courteous major who commanded at Sarcelles informed me that the Queen Elizabeths were in the neighbourhood of Arnouville, or at all events there I should obtain definite information respecting the position of the 1st battalion, that of which I was in search. He added to his kindness a permission to ride along the direct road between Sarcelles and Arnouville, by which I saved a considerable détour. This direct route was seldom used, as it was close to the front, and, passing as it does over an exposed table land, was within easy and tempting range of the guns of Fort du Nord. However, Fort du Nord was civil enough not to concern itself with a single horseman, and I rode along in peace, enjoying the fine prospect, in which the most prominent object was the Cathedral of St. Denis, with the double crown work du

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Nord lying down in the valley in front of it, a grim proof that the aspiration, "Cedant arma togæ" had not yet been realised. Along this road, after it crosses the track of the Northern Railway, were the abandoned field-barracks occupied by the Guards before they housed themselves in the villages—pleasant habitations, no doubt, in the fine weather, but now bearing a forlorn and squalid appearance in the midst of the slushy fields. Their construction, however, did great credit to the troops, strengthened with earth banks as they were on the front next Paris, so as to be practically bomb-proof. At Arnouville I found the Emperor Alexander Regiment represented, but the Queen Elizabeths were further on. I had to turn my horse's head due Paris-ward, and jog on the paved road till I reached the village of Garges. Here, indeed, were Queen Elizabeths, but not of the battalion I wanted. The latter, I was told, was in Dugny, still further to the front—in fact, so far to the front, that when there, there was nothing beyond save *Feldwachen* and patrols. Through a miry byepath I took my way—the regular route running along the front being too much exposed to form an eligible means of transit—and presently came upon a piece of road illustrating the thoroughness with which the Germans do everything they set themselves to do. The road must have been terribly bad—too bad even for strong horses and resolute drivers—seeing that its bottom was a quagmire. But the pioneers had gone to work and fascined the track much as the constructors of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway treated the quaking surface of Chat Moss. Over the fascines had been laid a regular pavement of bricks, artistically beaten level with paviours' mallets, and the track was sound enough for a road steamer. Crossing the raised path through the inundations caused by the dams

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on the river Morée I was brought up by a double post at the entrance to the park of a château, and conducted to the château itself by one of the sentries. Here I found the Staff of one of the battalions of the Queen Elizabeth Regiment—the battalion, too, which I wanted—and was right hospitably welcomed by Hauptmann von Altrock, who commanded the battalion, and by the junior officers who shared the château with their chief. But the officers of the Queen Elizabeth regiment were not in the same blithe and buoyant spirits as when I had met them in the early part of the war. Although frank and hearty as of yore, a deep gloom hung over them, that could not be dispelled by whatsoever exertion on their part. There was a sternly good cause for the gloom. In the fight at Le Bourget on the 31st October eight comrades had fallen, to rise no more; twelve more had gone down wounded. Of the whole fatal casualties to the regiment that day, one-sixth part had consisted of officers. Among the dead was Colonel von Zaluskowski, the father of his regiment, a man beloved by all. The tears stood in the eyes of his adjutant as he showed me the snuffbox which the good Colonel had given him as a remembrance, while he lay mortally wounded in the stable into which they bore him out of the hail of lead that swept the road.

While we sat at supper a detachment from the fore-posts brought in a deserter who had come across from the French lines. As regards the lower part of his person, he was a Garde Mobile; his trousers were uniform trousers; but he wore the blouse and cap of the French peasant. His appearance was sufficiently weird as he was brought in—his face enveloped in the coloured pocket-handkerchief of one of his escort. As soon as he was uncased he eagerly asked for bread, and went at a

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huge hunk which the Captain cut him with a vigour and resolution which, if displayed in warfare, would have made him a very tough customer. He had some disconnected and scrappy intelligence concerning an internal commotion which he averred had taken place within Paris in the afternoon; but he plainly knew very little about the matter. His information, however, in so far tallied with a report unofficially communicated by an officer on field watch, that he had heard during the afternoon firing, which seemed to him to be going on inside Paris. It was, however, so difficult to arrive at a correct conclusion whence came the sound of firing that did not take place on one's own immediate front, that the officer in question wisely refrained from giving a positive opinion on the subject.

Late in the evening some of the officers were good enough to escort me to a low bluff on the edge of the wooded grounds of a chateau—an elevation which, trivial as it is, commands the whole of the flat expanse, the defensive margin of which is formed by Forts du Nord, de l'Est, and Aubervilliers. Here was the plain seen by moonlight, and Paris by some other light also, whether gas, oil, or candles, I knew not. This plain was the first I had seen on the northern side of Paris, where the configuration of the ground admitted of a sortie in force. Here there was room for the deployment of a large army, and the evolution might have been performed under the great guns of the forts. It was this flat, between the Canal de l'Ourcq and the rising grounds to the west of St. Denis, which was the theatre of the battle by which Blücher terminated the campaign of 1814, and gained Paris. La Villette, Clichy, Rouvroy, and Aubervilliers, all localities on the plateau, occur again and again in the narratives of that engagement. Blücher would have

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found some difficulty now in carrying the positions behind these places as one day's work. It would have puzzled Langeron to make a dash from St. Denis, and storm the heights of Montmartre, as he did that afternoon of the 30th of March, 1814. The only defences then were the entrenched lines across the face of Montmartre, stretching over to the rising ground of Belleville. Now Blücher would have found, as his countrymen were finding to-day, the way stopped long before the ascent of Montmartre begins, by the guns and works of that array of forts beginning with Du Nord and ending with Noisy. As a vantage ground for battle the tables were turned. The plateau was no longer an eligible space on which an army could manœuvre itself into Paris, but a tempting expanse on which an army defending Paris might come out to do battle with the besieger. But this was only in theory. The greenest military student knows what must be the stamp of troops that will complete an effective deployment under an enemy's fire, and advance to the attack under the same. This was the imperative condition attached to a sortie on a large scale on this plateau; and Trochu, who knew what manner of men in the matter of discipline were his troops, was wise to shun it. And the difficulty of which I speak was only the difficulty on the threshold—the *pons asinorum* of an offensive operation in force against the Prussian environment. How strong was the line which the besiegers held athwart this plain is only to be realised by having personally inspected it. Some details regarding it I will enter into again; but it would be tedious to enter into elaborate particularisation of every feature. It may be said here that, held by the strong force which was wisely judged requisite—a force consisting of the *élite* of the Prussian soldiery, each position turned to the very best

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account by the most careful and judicious engineering appliances, and with supports which were practically illimitable available at short notice, one with any knowledge of the subject could come to no other opinion than that the beleaguering line at this critical position could have resisted an assault of a more formidable character than any which the garrison of Paris, from what we knew of its character and appliances, could be judged capable of making. This is no *ex post facto* conclusion on my part, but one published long before events occurred to test and prove its correctness.

Each of these old-fashioned villages surrounding Paris is all but a fortress in itself. The walls are of great thickness, and there is so little woodwork that shells would not fire the houses. This Dugny, for instance, might be held by a handful of resolute men against all comers. Its streets—if streets the wall-bordered roads can be termed—are so many covered ways capable of affording safe passage even under a hot artillery fire. The farmhouses are built like citadels, walled in on all four sides, and with the windows looking inward. Some of them are even loopholed. A few judicious barricades were all that was needed as the complement of the defence. These, it is needless to say, the Guards had not neglected to erect. In Dugny were some of the most artistic barricades I have ever seen—in fact, barricade is hardly the term for them—constructed as they were of stones taken from the chaussée, faced with a deep slope of earth, and capable of protecting their defenders from the fire of the heaviest artillery. Their appreciation of the axiom that water is a better barrier than earth the Prussians had shown by effecting an extensive inundation between Dugny and Le Blanc Mesnil.

To return for a moment to the view from the fringe

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of the grove. Before us in the watery moonlight lay Le Bourget, dark and silent, as if it were mourning for the slaughter that had been wrought within it. Across the plain, and more to the right, the moon's rays fell upon the great inundation which the French had made in front of St. Denis, by damming the little river of Croud. In front of the water ran the chain of French watch-fires, falling back towards the south-east on Aubervilliers. There were bright lights in Forts du Nord and Aubervilliers. Behind, there was a dark streak, presumably caused by the *enceinte*, and then the bank of lights rose in straggling tiers up to the top of Montmartre. I could trace no lines of street lamps defining the thoroughfare. The lights I saw came exclusively from houses; and evidently there could then have been no great lack in Paris of some means or other of "showing a light." At times it seemed as if we could see figures across the lights, dulling their brightness momentarily. Likely enough, for as we stood we were within some five kilometres of Paris.

Next morning, in the company of two officers present at the recapture of Le Bourget on the 31st of October, I went over the ground and carefully examined the village itself, obtaining from my companions a detailed narrative of the events of the day, and noting down also several anecdotes of individual danger or courage. On my return to head-quarters, a staff officer, to whom the disposition of important interests had been entrusted, was kind enough to go over my notes, and add to them information only to be obtained at head-quarters. It may not be occupying space uselessly if I rapidly run over the incidents of an action which was in its way certainly unique in the late war, before describing the condition of the village as I saw it.

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The line of foreposts linking Le Bourget with Dugny has already been described. Le Bourget forms the apex of a tolerably acute triangle, having for its base a straight line drawn between Dugny and Le Blanc Mesnil. It stands out therefore in the plain detached and in front, so that the cursory observer might inquire of what use it was to hold it at all. But its value is easily apparent. In the first place, it stands on the great Lille chaussée, on which for some distance there was no such advantageous defensive position. In the second place, it acted as a kind of *tête du pont* to the inundations which protected the Prussian front in this locality. Had there been no Le Bourget, it would have mattered little to the German security; but there being a Le Bourget, it mattered much that it should not be occupied by the French, in whose hands it would have been constantly available as a nucleus for offensive operations. As a position of so much importance, it may be questioned to-day, with that *ex post facto* intelligence which is so suggestive, whether the Germans should not have held it with a stronger force than a single company standing in it, with orders to fall back if attacked in force. The explanation given me was that the post was so exposed that the fewer men in it the less the chance of casualties. It may be questioned, however, whether any probable number of casualties so occurring would have mounted up to the sum of those incurred on the 31st October.

Be this as it may, the expulsion, or rather the retreat, took place on the 28th, to be succeeded next by a German reconnaissance which showed the enemy in too great force to be assaulted without premeditated dispositions. While these were being deliberately made, during the days that elapsed between the French occupancy and the recapture, the German field artillery threw about 2,000

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grenades into the place. An ordinary village would have been burnt over and over again, but Le Bourget does not seem even to have caught fire.

On the morning of the 31st, the three battalions of the Queen Elizabeth marched from Dugny, and by eight o'clock stood at Pont Iblon, on the Lille road, a point where there were temporary barracks for two battalions. In their front stood three batteries of the horse artillery of the Guard. Along with the Queen Elizabeths in Pont Iblon was one battalion (the Fusilier) of the Queen Augusta Regiment, commanded by the lamented Count Waldersee, and one company of Engineers. In Dugny (on the north of Pont Iblon, which may be described as the centre of the operations) there lay two battalions of the Emperor Franz Guard Regiment, under the command of Major Derenthall. I have already named the gallant officer commanding the Queen Elizabeths. At Le Blanc Mesnil on the east lay two battalions of the Kaiser Alexander Regiment, under Lieutenant-Colonel von Zeuner. Here also were two batteries foot artillery of the Guard, supported by three companies of the Schützen Guard Regiment. The reserve consisted of eight battalions, a cavalry regiment stood at Bonneuil, and a reserve force of artillery near Gonesse. All the attacking force belonged to the second division of the Guards. In all there were engaged about 6,000 bayonets. The French had eight battalions in Le Bourget—Gardes Mobiles and Impériales, besides Francs-tireurs. At Drancy, to the south rear, and almost opposite to Le Blanc Mesnil, they had a large force of reserves. Other reserves were seen in La Courneuve, but the artillery fire from the Prussian field-guns prevented any of the French reserves from taking part in the engagement. The Forts du Nord, de l'Est, Aubervilliers, Romainville, and Noisy, all poured

out a profuse fire on the Prussian troops, both in their positions, and as soon as they began to advance, and a battery of field-guns stood on the right of the village of Le Bourget.

At eight o'clock the Kaiser Alexander Battalions began their march, as they had the farthest distance to traverse. Availing themselves skilfully of the course of the little river Molleret and of the cutting on the Laon Railway, they escaped with little loss the flanking fire from Drancy and from the eastern forts, and by nine o'clock they had captured and were holding the railway station close to the chaussée at the south-western exit of the village. Thus practically the French retreat was cut off, and to appreciate the character of the resistance offered by the French this important element must not be lost sight of. At a quarter-past eight, the two battalions of the Emperor Franz Regiment quitted Dugny and came on rapidly to Le Bourget by the road which enters the village about midway in its length; while one battalion fought its way in by the road and the houses to the left, the other undertook to clear a large and beautiful park flanking the village on the right of the Dugny road. The three battalions of the Queen Elizabeth Regiment, with the accompanying Queen Augusta Regiment, left Pont Iblon at the same hour as the Dugny contingent, came on through the fire at the double, carried the barricade by storm, were inside by nine o'clock, and finally, by hand-to-hand fighting from house to house, cleared the village of Frenchmen, with the aid of the other regiments, by half-past twelve o'clock. In the engagement there were killed and wounded 39 officers and 449 men. The French lost about 600, and 1,300 of them were taken prisoners.

This much my companions related to me as we

walked down from Dugny to Le Bourget—it being forbidden to traverse the intervening space on horseback. Bending to the left, so as to get on the chaussée, along the sides of which the Queen Elizabeths had advanced, we presently reached it about 500 yards from the village. About the same distance on the other side stood a little brick house at a slight bend in the road. "There was where we got the order to double," cried big Lieutenant von ——, "and didn't we pelt along!" "And didn't you puff and blow?" slily asked our other companion; "anyhow," he added, turning to me, "von ——, big as he is, was one of the first over the barricade."

At a glance, now that I was on the chaussée, I could see what a tough place was this Le Bourget. It resembles extremely those walled Indian villages on the road from Cawnpore to Lucknow, through which Havelock had to fight his way, and the loss in doing which made him give up his first attempt to relieve the latter place. The broad road formed its weak point. On either side had extended, for a breadth of about 100 yards, a massive wall, and this wall was continued longitudinally along the backs of the houses. The place was a fortress. With that strong entrenchment across the broad chaussée, I think Prussian or British troops would have held it till Christmas-time. But the French had made wofully little use of the advantages to their hand. With the exception of the single battery on the right of the village, they had no artillery near it. A battery on the chaussée in front of the entrenchment, another looking toward Dugny, and another toward Le Blanc Mesnil, would have stiffened the problem materially. And where had been the mitrailleuses? Here was just the place for their use; for a street had to be traversed, and if the mitrailleuse has a *métier* anywhere, it is in sweeping a street or a road.

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There was, it is true, one mitrailleuse at the upper end of the village; but the capture of the railway station by the Kaiser Alexanders early made its position untenable.

The big lieutenant told me how the Queen Elizabeths came on. They left the chaussée empty, and took to the fields on either side. On the right, in skirmishing order, came the 1st Company, with yellow-bearded Captain von Helldorff leading it on. On the left of the chaussée, in the same order, came the 2nd Company, commanded by Lieutenant von Buddenbrock. In the rear respectively of these two came the 3rd and 4th Companies (the four companies forming the 1st Battalion), in that columnar formation in which the Prussian company is wont to go into battle. Behind it came the 2nd Battalion; behind that again the Fusiliers. On the left were the Augustas. I could not wonder at the big lieutenant puffing and blowing. Through the deep potato-land the going must have been awfully heavy, and splashes of lead in the face did not contribute to lightening the way. All along the track were evidences of the latter hindrance —the accustomed relics of slaughter. Behind a friendly dungheap, the only cover in all the exposed rush of 1,500 yards, the wounded had crept, and there yet lay their blood-dabbled rags. The graves began at about 500 yards from the village. Just to the right of the now levelled entrenchment was one wherein lay three occupants. My companions owned how staunchly the French stood their ground here, fighting till the bigger men drove them back. Through the loop holes in the walls right and left of the entrenchment they kept their chassepots sticking, loading at the breech without withdrawal, and firing continuously. The officers, rushing up close to the wall, grappled with the weapons and dragged them from the hands of the men who plied

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them. The pioneers came up under the fire, and with their crowbars stove gaps in the thick wall. Nos. 1 and 2 companies, forming up from skirmishing order right and left, inwards inclined and tumbled pell-mell on the breast-high barricade. The officers led till they fell. One went down with a bullet from a revolver, another got a bayonet right in the heart as he chested the stones of the entrenchment. As Helldorff dropped among the Mobile Guards, one of them took off a part of his ear, but fared considerably worse than Peter when he served another fellow-creature in the same way. The following are the names of the officers of the Queen Elizabeths who fell before reaching, or at the barricade:—Captain von Renthe-Fink, Lieutenants von Merckel, von Schoenitz, von Zedlitz, von Luks, and von Knobelsdorff. The band pushed up under cover of the wall on the right, and placing itself there, played the troops past as they stormed into the village—one air my informant remembered well—the "Pariser Einzugsmarsch."

Just on the left of the entrance to the village is a small villa, which must have been the scene of a deadly combat. There were several graves on the tiny lawn: a river god which had once adorned a fountain there was knocked into splinters. The house was riddled through and through; it was new, and thinner than the houses of the old construction. There were bayonet marks on the stairs leading to the cellar, and blood on the walls. The gable and front were pitted all over with bullet marks, just as if the house had got a white small-pox. In the corresponding house on the right—a big old farmhouse—the fight had been very warm. Here, storming in through the breaches the pioneers had made, the Guardsmen had fallen upon half a battalion of Frenchmen, and, after a struggle, had captured 300 of them. On the wall of this

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house was chalked the words,—"*Prussiens du diable; vous ne verrez pas vos femmes.*" The taunt stirred the devil in the hearts of the Germans. There is a little bay in the roadway a few paces further on formed by a projecting house. Here it was that Colonel von Zaluskowski fell. He was carried into a stable to the right, and there Dr. Schroeter found that he was shot through the liver and fatally wounded. Hauptmann von Altrock was leading the advance, if the term could be applied to a desperate street fight in which every man's hand was for himself. Count Kanitz, who commanded the 3rd Brigade, and Lieutenant-General von Budritzki, who directed the operations of the day, entered the village with the 2nd Battalion of the Queen Elizabeths. From every house, as the column pushed forward, poured down the deadly hail; the French stuck to the houses as evicted Irishmen stick to their cabins. The Grenadiers went right and left into each individual house, and in each house there was a fierce hand-to-hand fight on the stairs. The Frenchmen fought on the landings—they fought in the rooms. The Guardsmen had to carry the balustrades at the bayonet point. Sometimes an obstinate Frenchman was pitchforked out of window on the bayonets—for it was not a time to stand on ceremony. Others had taken refuge in the cellars, and blazed away through the flaps. In the cellars it was where most of the prisoners were taken. But prisoners were not taken till the Frenchmen were utterly beaten out of defensive means; nay, there were cases when, after these had "given out," the stubborn Gauls still refused to yield. The smoke traces were still visible against the entrance to one cellar, to which fire had to be applied, and the occupants regularly smoked out; they would not yield till the threatenings of asphyxia became too strong. In the East-end of Lon-

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don, just off the Mile-end Road, there is a spot known to and shunned by our metropolitan police. Its proper name is St. John's Place; its common acceptation is Jack's Hole. Hither it is that the blousy demi-monde of Ratcliffe Highway enveigle the sailor, who finds himself stripped and solitary when he escapes from his drunken sleep. The police despair of doing any good with Jack's Hole, it is so like a rabbit warren. You go in at one end, and you can go through, house by house, from one end to the other, without ever coming down out of the first floor. The labyrinth is useful when there is a hunt. As I saw it to-day Le Bourget, as regards thoroughness of communication, was a veritable Jack's Hole. So fierce had been the storm of fire in the street, that the pioneers had to break a passage from house to house through the dividing partitions. Thus it was possible to traverse along the upper floor of the houses nearly half the length of the village on either side of the chief (and indeed the only) street. And, in addition to the isolated fights in the gardens and outhouses in the rear of the houses fronting the street, there were actually, so to speak, three streams of combat going on in the place at one and the same time—that in the street, where men ducked their heads, and made a rush from shelter to shelter as they found it formed by the favouring projecting gables of houses, and those two going on on the upper floor of each row of houses. It was from a house, across the front of which is inscribed in large characters, "Pensionnat de Demoiselles," on the left-hand side of the way, that Colonel Zaluskowski was shot down. A party of his men made a dash forward, and carried the house with a rush. In the passage, which was densely packed with Frenchmen, the cry of "Pardon" was sent up, and the Grenadiers held the points of their bayonets

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up as they crushed into the place and pushed their way upstairs. In a room at the top of the stairs stood a French officer, who shot down with his revolver the first soldier who entered, and then, throwing his weapon on the floor, appealed for quarter to an officer who was among the first to enter. The officer would have granted it, but for once the bonds of discipline were burst. The men had heard the cry of "Pardon;" they saw their comrade lying dead before them, and the fury of angry revenge was stronger within them than the voice of their officer could control. When the "*demoiselles*" come back to the smashed and battered *pensionnat*, they will see where the boards soaked in the blood of the French officer. It was a little beyond this that Lieutenant Paizeniki fell, shot dead on the spot as he was cheering on his men. About half way up the village, on the right-hand side as one goes towards Paris, is the church, a building of considerable size, with a spire of some pretensions. It stands slightly recessed from the street, and in the little recess the Frenchmen made a desperate stand, firing from the steps of the church and from behind the house that projects before one comes to it. They were dislodged from this position by the Prussians effecting a lodgment in the house, and from this point of vantage firing down upon them. Then from a house a little farther on upon the other side of the way, the French, who had barricaded the windows and the roof, opened a furious fire upon this house, occupied, as I have said, by the Prussians. In its gable I counted two hundred dents of chassepot bullets, and then lost the tally. At length the Prussians forced their foes to evacuate this position, and got into the church. Hither they brought their wounded to be companions to the French wounded, who already littered the place. Even now the lower

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end of the floor of the building had red coagulated cakes in the cavities of its pavement, where the blood had lain and thickened as it poured from the men lying there on the stones, waiting while Dr. Schroeter could overtake their injuries. His colleague was already *hors de combat* with a bullet through his shoulder. What a wan, dreary look that church had now! Its open door creaked dismally on the wind. As you entered there lay the bloody rags and the gouts that were the relics of the wounded. Shells had stove in portions of the roof, and the floor was strewed with fragments of ceiling. The light from the windows had been meant to be softened by pictured screens. These were all unfastened, and swinging in the wind. The Virgin had a bullet-hole through her heart; Our Lord had been shot right through the head. In the little side chapels the images and the alabaster candlesticks were unharmed, but the pale marble was spotted with blood. On the altar, dinted here and there with a bullet-hole, and with a blood-stained boot on its steps, there lay open the great psalter. Had the priest, I wondered, stood to his spiritual weapons to the last, as his countrymen had to the arm of the flesh? The book lay open at the 56th Psalm—"Miserere mei, Deus, miserere mei, Deu. Clamabo ad Deum altissimum." In the vestiary behind the altar lay a tangled heap of rich and sumptuous robes, such as would have delighted the heart of Mr. Mackonochie or Mr. Purchas—stoles and copes, velvet mantles with gold and green crosses embroidered on them, and a variety of decorated garments, the appellations of which are not within my secular knowledge.

Beyond the church the musketry fire seemed to have slackened slightly as the French became conscious of the hopelessness of the struggle. Still, every house afforded

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evidence of the stubborn manner in which the fight was maintained, in the shape of dents of chassepot bullets. The swinging iron sign of the Cheval Rouge, the little auberge of the village, was perforated by fourteen bullet-holes. The pioneers had to tear down the lower fronts of some of the houses to let the men get at the pertinacious defenders. When these did not back their way upstairs, their usual "dernier ressort" was the cellar. It was out of the cellars that quite one-half of the prisoners were excavated. There were eloquent traces of hard fighting in an enclosed row of houses which runs to the left at right angles to the main street. Here it was that the Queen Augusta battalion came battling its way in, having skirted the village thus far on the left. Before they cleared this clump of houses the Augustas lost six officers.

Of all the desolate places I have ever seen this shattered village of Le Bourget was the most desolate. Except its military occupants, who, in strength quite formidable enough to obviate any prospect of a repetition of the occurrence of the 28th October, occupied a half-detached portion of the village, there was not in the whole of it a living thing, so far as I saw, save a forlorn prowling cat that seemed to have inherited the spirit of the French soldiers that once had been the occupants of the place, and put her back up and spat at us venomously, as if she were French to the core, and hated the invader worse than she craved for food. There was not a house that had not been crashed into by several shells —not a roof that had the remotest claim to be intact, not a garden but what had nearly as many shell-holes as it had plants, not a wall that was not breached, not a window that was not shattered. The chaussée was strewed with the fragments of shells and with flattened

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chassepot bullets. In the entrance to the court-yards were knapsacks, trousers, coats, shirts, blood-stained bandages, and other *débris*. The wind, as it whistled mournfully along the deserted street, blew to and fro fragments of soldiers' ledgers, scraps of Feldpost letters with loving words on the yellow morsels of papers and tattered leaves of pocket Bibles. I think when Paris may once again know the meaning of peace, that her wise men would do well to build a wall round this village, and keep it always as I saw it. No better corrective to a war mania could be imagined. It is conveniently near Paris, and when the unreasoning mob begins to clamour it would be so easy to answer such a cry as "A Berlin!" with the counter-shout of "A Le Bourget." How near Le Bourget is to Paris is worth mentioning. The stone that stands at the southern end of the village record, "à Paris, 4 kil. 9"—not three miles from the barriers. We were a good deal nearer when we stood behind the last barricade, and cautiously peeped over at the French forepost across the chaussée in front of La Courneuve some four hundred paces before us.

Returning to head-quarters in Margency on the 24th, I found everything reported quiet on the north side, and that tidings of the same tenour had been sent in from the eastern section. I may recall a conversation which on the same evening I had with a distinguished officer of the Crown Prince's staff, as tending to show how accurate was the reckoning of the besiegers respecting the policy to be pursued by the besieged. My interlocutor told me that there was no expectation, on the part of the German military leaders, of a sortie from Paris—that was to say, of a sortie and nothing more. Trochu, he argued, was sensible enough to know that sorties, in themselves, have very little effect in helping towards the raising of a

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siege. But he had discrimination enough to perceive three things. First, that there were more troops in Paris than were wanted for its defence, now that it had been fortified to a pitch beyond which fortification could scarcely go; secondly, that as Metz had too forcibly illustrated, a superfluity of mouths, even if the mouths were the mouths of fighting men, was a source of weakness and of ultimate ruin to a city that had a limit to its powers of furnishing provisions; and, thirdly, that these superfluous fighting men might have a chance of effecting some good if outside the cordon of environment, and their character changed from that of a besieged army to that of an active field army, capable of co-operating with other forces, not cooped up behind walls and dykes. "Wherefore," continued my friend, "if we are not to continue in this state of utter stagnation till Paris has eaten its head off, and is forced by hunger to capitulate, we may expect an effort on a grand scale that will not be a sortie in the ordinary acceptation of the word, but an attempt in force to push a portion of the besieged force out through our lines into the comparatively open country beyond. On which side this effort will take place, if it takes place at all, there is no special basis on which to form a prognostication; but we may be sure of this, that on the side where the real effort is not made, on that side there will be a feigned attack in force, calculated to give the impression that it is no feint. The probability of such an effort depends materially, there can be no doubt, on the intelligence which may reach Paris as to the French forces outside, and what is the nature of their doings. The present quiet may be, and I am strongly inclined to think is, but the lull before a great storm. Should a real and heartily meant effort to break through be made, and fail (as fail it shall), and the

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failure be coupled with absence of news, or bad news, from outside, then surely the end cannot be far off."

The latter impression—I mean the impression that the siege could not last much longer—was very general in the German lines up to about the middle of December. There can be no doubt, I think, that Bismarck and von Moltke were deceived as to the store of provisions in the city. The delusion was maintained by descriptions which from time to time were made public, written by persons inside of the beleaguered city, of the straits to which even people with plenty of money were already reduced. If rats were selling for more than fowls were to be bought for in peace-time, and when donkey was a delicacy, surely a condition closely akin to famine was reached. So it was argued; and it may be added to that, the besiegers utterly misjudged the power of Paris to face and endure continuously what, stripped of sensationalism, did intensify into a real and terrible pinch. The miscalculation was not unjustifiable. All that they, or that any body else, knew of the beautiful, sinful capital and its inhabitants was of a character to lead to the anticipation that Spartanism was an impossibility in frivolous, luxurious Paris. Before the end came, the Germans frankly owned how far they had erred in their reckoning, and their respect for Paris grew in proportion to the duration of her resistance. That resistance was the one break in the black cloud of humiliation that hung like a pall over French martialism when the peace was signed.

The world abused Bismarck for the dry matter-of-fact way in which he warned Paris that if it held out much longer it would incur a certainty of absolute starvation after the capitulation. But, whatever sentiment might have had to say in the matter, and whether the German spoke from a single heart or not, it was unquestionable

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that his warning would have proved but too true but for the nobly prompt succour of Britain in the emergency. The environs of Paris were stripped and depopulated. In all the beautiful villages along this northern side, there were but mere handfuls of resident population, and they were all but starving. In the early days the Francs-tireurs had overrun the district, frightening everybody away either into Paris or off into the back country by terrible stories of Prussian atrocities, and then, what the people did not take with them, the Francs-tireurs looted. The Prussians, on their arrival, travelled miles without seeing a living thing. Now the people were beginning to come back out of the back country, having heard by report that the Germans had not teeth like boars, and did not eat little children. But they came back destitute to their forlorn homes. If they had money, they bought some food of the marketenders; if they had not, they lived on the vegetables which were still plentiful in the fields (the German soldier does not understand the virtue of salad), and on the bread the soldiers might spare from their rations. Out of such a population and such a country as this, Paris could not expect much to fill her depleted magazines after the capitulation. You might travel from St. Germain to Gonesse in the days I write of without finding a place where you could get a dinner by paying for it—a glass of wine or a feed of corn for your horse. The Germans—provident fellows—had cleared potato-fields of their produce, and stored them in pits for winter consumption, in anticipation that they should have to stay the winter before Paris. Out on the foreposts under fire of the forts, there were still a few fields where the tubers were yet in the earth. But what is a potato-field to Paris? The French troops, by the way, seemed inclined to risk more for their potatoes than

for anything else. At first they had come out potato-digging in large bodies—one batch using the spade while the other covered them. For a time the Germans had refrained from disturbing this industrial occupation; but the demonstration became too impudent, and the potato-parties were fired upon with the needle-gun. Now the tactics were different. The French came out in parties of three—two skirmishing assiduously, while the third dug with equal assiduity.

On the 26th of November, all being still reasonably quiet on the north side, I quitted Margency, with the intention to familiarise myself somewhat more with the positions of the Maas Army, by visiting at least a portion of the eastern side. On my way to Gonesse, which was my first halting-place, instead of taking the low-country route along the front, I crossed the summit of the hill of Montmorency and came down upon Ecouen, where in the beautiful and historical château—its style of architecture pure and veritable Renaissance—there was a large lazarette of the Guards, which I was desirous to inspect. It is impossible to imagine a building better calculated for an hospital than this château, standing as it does on an elevation which secures a fine prospect and a free current of air, with lofty halls for wards, wide staircases, hot and cold water on every floor, beds and bedding enough and to spare, commodious cooking apparatus, and a latrine system of an excellence very rare in France. With the introduction of a simple means of ventilation, such as that in so efficient operation in Middlesex Hospital, the place could hardly have been improved. It had been, till the invasion, a pensionnat for daughters of members of the Legion of Honour, who were cared for by a number of sisters or nuns, and the latter to the number of twenty still remained, and were indefatigable in their

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attention to the ailing, although of another and a hostile nation. Staff-Surgeon-Major Tegener seemed as efficient as he certainly was a most solicitous chief, and he had a sufficient number of able and zealous medical assistants. The number of patients in the château at this time was 120, of whom two were Frenchmen, one an officer with an amputation of the leg. The great bulk of the cases were of sickness, the prevalent diseases being abdominal typhus, typhoid and gastric fevers. There were but few wounded, the proximity of typhus being detrimental to recovery from wounds. Typhus supervening on a gunshot wound almost invariably, I believe, results in erysipelas. There had been one or two cases of *typhus exanthematicus*—the "spotted typhus," which I had seen in Metz—but those so attacked had recovered and been sent home. A peregrination through typhus wards is never a pleasant thing. Do what you may in the way of disinfection and ventilation, it is impossible to banish altogether the fever taint that haunts the air. And the taint of typhus fever is, I think, worse than that of any other sickness. At times it is so dense that you almost fancy you can see it, and it sticks in your throat as if you had tried to swallow a cobweb. I must say it was very strong in the Château of Ecouen. The ventilation was insufficient. Every military surgeon knows what a constant war he has to wage with his patients on the ventilation question, and the German military sick rebelled against free air with exceptional stubbornness, because the Germans, when well, seem to have but a rudimentary conception of the meaning of ventilation. I knew a wily old army surgeon who used to break by chance an upper window or two in each ward, and always forgot to schedule the breakages in the barrack damage-list. It would have been no bad policy on Dr. Tegener's part to

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have resorted to the same pious fraud. Matters were worse than usual, because the sick were mostly in the smaller rooms, the great hall—"Salle de Napoléon"—and the other larger and loftier apartments having been emptied for sweetening. The place had been used for some time as an hospital. Before the Germans came the French had so used it, and then it had been occupied as such also by another army corps before the Guards came and adopted it as their "2nd Lazarette." From time to time there had been a good many wounded in it, and in the early days, perhaps, not much attention to cleanliness. The result had been that the place had in some measure become tainted with erysipelas, and, indeed, with gangrene. How subtle, obscure, and persistent are these strange place-infections there are few hospital surgeons who have not had good cause to know. It was from a profound conviction that not all the appliances of inlaid floors and walls lined with glazed tiles sufficed to prevent the absorption and retention of the malaria that the late Sir James Simpson was led to become so energetic an advocate for cottage hospitals. Some years ago erysipelas got such a grip of that admirably managed institution, King's College Hospital, that an indoor patient could not have an abscess lanced that this disease did not almost inevitably supervene. Certainly the empty wards in the Château of Ecouen looked fresh and healthy enough now with their scrubbed floors, their open windows, and their neat cots, with the clean linen, the legacy bequeathed by the young ladies who were the previous inhabitants. But he would have been a rash man who would have been confident that the demon had been exorcised out of them, especially while it was still rampant in other parts of the building. I saw one poor fellow dying in a corner, of hospital gangrene in its worst form; the part affected was bloated to

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a great size, and the swarthy tint of the gangrene seemed to fight for the mastery with the bright, glazed redness of the adjacent flesh. His face had that ghastly, anxious pallor which is the constant concurrent of gangrene. The sad wistful eyes of the poor fellow are before me as I write. In another ward were several cases of erysipelas, chiefly as the sequent to typhus, from a low habit of body. If this be a common result, I wonder the whole crew were not down with erysipelas in a mass. Heaven knew they had nothing to fetch them out of a low habit of body. There was not a drop of port-wine in the place, or indeed of any wine save a sour country trash that would have given dysentery to a milestone. There was no porter, no ale, no cognac, no Liebig, no milk extract, none of those little comforts to which the heart of a sick man turns when his gorge would rise at the food he eats when well. Fancy men sick unto death of typhus having a plate of lean boiled beef put before them. Chances of recovery were incalculably lessened by their having to live on this tough stuff or want; and when they should have got round the corner, if they did round it, convalescence must have been materially retarded by this unsuitable fare. Perhaps, however, the want of generous wine was most severely felt. The poor fellow on whom gangrene had fixed its fangs had at his bed-head a cup of sour wine and water. I never was so thankful in my life that I had a big and full flask in my pocket. Its contents were good sound cognac; we filled a great iron tablespoon with the cordial and poured it down his throat. He brightened visibly on the instant—not indeed that cognac or anything else could have saved his life, but material comforts help not a little to smooth the road to the dark portals. The other fellows raised themselves on their elbows from their fevered pillows, to gaze with

eager eyes on the flask. How I wished, as I poured out its last drops, that it had the property of the widow's cruise!

It may interest medical readers, should I have any, to know that the cold-water treatment of typhus was tried in the Ecouen Lazarette with considerable success. I saw several men snugly packed in the wet sheets, and they expressed their sense of the grateful alterative which the cold afforded them. After all, the treatment differs little in principle from that of applying ice to the shaved head, which is in almost invariable use in delirium. I believe that here the treatment was resorted to in consequence of the want of physic, of which the stock was exhausted. The former occupants had a nice little apothecary's shop, which was still well stocked, but its use was barred to the German doctors in consequence of the difference in the two pharmacopœias. It appeared the premises were wanting for working the little question in simple proportion which was all that seemed requisite. Before leaving the château I wrote a letter to the chiefs of the English Ambulance in St. Germain, laying the facts of the case before them, and entreating them to send a waggon-load of stores round to Ecouen with all haste. How this request was acted on will presently appear.

It must be consistent with the experience of all who had occasion to journey much among the German troops during the war, that the Etappen Commandant* is a being of a somewhat variable temperament. Sometimes he as good as tells you to go to the devil. Again he is fairly civil, but eminently unsatisfactory. He is sorry, but he has no quarters, you must bivouac. An excellent type of this variety was the Etappen Commandant at

* The Etappen Commandant was the military official (of rank proportionate to the importance of the position) who acted as chief local administrator, seeing to the billets, transport of troops, forwarding of stores, &c.

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Corny, who consigned the English Ambulance to a muddy bivouac in an open field, when a little trouble might have enabled him to find them decent shelter. Again, your Etappen Commandant is suspicious, and evidently would like to stick a file of bayonets on either side of you, or he is regularly and unmistakeably obtuse, and you leave him empty, it is true, but with feelings of compassion rather than of irritation. Sometimes you chance on a prince of an Etappen Commandant, a gentleman who not only puts himself out of the way to find you quarters, but asks you to share his dinner into the bargain. Such a paragon of Etappen Commandants was he of Gonesse. When muddy and belated I called upon him, he made me out a billet on the instant, and sent a man with me to the same. It was not much of a place, it was true, but it was as good as any other quarters in Gonesse. I had my choice of four empty rooms on the first floor of an abandoned apothecary's shop. On the floor of each room was a mattress; the remaining furniture consisted of a chair and the inevitable picture of the Napoleonic dynasty—*the* Napoleon with an arm round that poor limp son of his, and the other pointing towards the ex-Emperor, who tries to look as like his uncle as possible, while he pats his boy on the head. A man cropped up from downstairs, and "took me in," as my servant for the time being. A German soldier is always ready for any job that will bring him in an honest penny, and is as content with a five-groschen piece as an English servant would be with half-a-crown. He told me of a misfortune that had occurred the day before at Aulnay, illustrating the danger of exposing lights on the foreposts within range of the enemy's fire. A military chaplain and a count, an officer in a cavalry regiment, shared the same room in a château in that exposed village, and neglected

to close the shutters when they lit their lights. Presently a shell from Aubervilliers crashed into the room, and exploding killed them both.

I was now in the country of the Guards, whose general custom it is to establish a kind of regimental club, which they call a casino, wherever a regiment happens to be quartered. Head-quarters being in Gonesse, the casino there was both well appointed and well frequented; and on the invitation of the Etappen Commandant I spent there a right merry evening. While somebody was singing a comic song, an officer rushed in with the tidings that "Paris was open." The song ceased, and all sprang to their feet; but it turned out that our friend was only hoaxing us. Nevertheless there were symptoms that the authorities thought the end must have been near. Three days before Metz capitulated, the contractors of the army received orders to hold themselves in readiness at a moment's notice to pour forth into the surrendered city. In this particular the coming event cast a true shadow before; and one felt tempted, when he found the order now repeated, to draw a hopeful augury from it. On the night of the 26th of November the order was despatched by telegram to all the contractors supplying the army with food that, in anticipation of the early capitulation of Paris, they should be prepared to supply exceptional demands upon their stores. The order was urgent, and caused great animation among the contractors. The German troops consumed the extra rations, and rations for many days and weeks besides, before the wished-for day came at last.

It is an axiom of unquestionable truth that the strength of the whole is equal only to the strength of the weakest part. Sagacious men at home did not fail to perceive that there must have been weak points in an

environment of such a circuit as that with which the Germans surrounded Paris, and the inference was tempting that a sortie at one or other of these weak points might have an important if not a successful result. This inference, natural enough for one at a distance, was dissipated by actual inspection. As I have already remarked, the weakest point of the siege on the north side of Paris was unquestionably the level tract between the road from Paris to Gonesse and the Forest of Bondy. While the region due north is dominated by heights and complicated by water, while the *col* of Pierrefitte dominates the flat on its left, at least as far as Stains, the space I have referred to had no natural advantages ready to the hand of the besiegers to meet the chances of a sortie in force. But so careful and skilful had been the application of military science that the position of the besiegers, from being open and precarious, had been converted into an elaborate entrenched camp, capable of being defended by resolute men against any field force that could have been brought against it. This line of defence had its right on Dugny, which I have already described, and ran east with a south-easterly bend through Pont Iblon, Le Blanc Mesnil, Aulnay, and Sevran, to Livry, which is the left of what was without it the weak joint in the harness. The little river Moree ordinarily flows in an insignificant channel scarcely capable of interposing an obstacle to cavalry, the ground in its front is nearly level, and for a great part of its extent is covered with a spur of the Forest of Bondy. There is a slight swell behind the little stream, but not enough to give any dominance of value in hindering troops from crossing the stream. The roads along which an attack would advance are numerous and excellent. Finally, an attacking force would have had the advantage of a covering fire from

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the forts of Paris up to the very muzzles of the German needle-guns.

As I rode along this forepost line on the 27th of November, on my way from Gonesse to Le Vert Galant, I was much struck with the masterly manner in which these disadvantages had been negatived. From being the weakest point of the environment I question if this tract had not been changed into one of the strongest. By a succession of dams the waters of the Moree had been arrested, and formed a continuous inundation of considerable depth and breadth all the way from Sevran to Dugny. There were indeed two breaks in the continuity, one at Pont Iblon, the other at the village of Aulnay. At the former the chaussée alone waded, as it were, through the water; there was no dry land right or left. To protect this point, Le Bourget, a mile further on, was strongly occupied, and acted as a bridge-head. The Paris-ward end of the causeway was crossed by a regular earthwork of solid and substantial construction. On the German side, right and left, were two batteries, whose fire converged on the chaussée, and above these, again, two more, while further to the right and further to the left were other batteries whose united fire could have swept a gnat off the chaussée. All along to Le Blanc Mesnil there were substantial entrenchments for infantry, with frequent emplacements for batteries interspersed. The latter village sits astride of the Moree, and was the key of the whole position. It had been made a fortress of in a most elaborate and effectual fashion. An enemy trusting for a passage over the inundation to his ability to force Mesnil, would have been leaning on a broken reed. On his left the inundation again widened out, and the battery sites and infantry entrenchments sprang up again on the gentle slope and continued all

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the way to Sevran. The water, and what would have been behind it waiting for the attack, were designed as the great obstacles to a sortie. Of course there was a chain of foreposts in the forest beyond, but in the event referred to it was their instructions to fall back and effect the recrossing with all convenient speed. To have sent supports, with a view to the retention of an advanced position—in a wood though it were—with level ground and great guns in its front, and deep water in its rear, would have been bad tactics, and therefore unlikely to have been put in practice by Germans. The line to be held to was that of the entrenchments behind the water, and a comparatively slender body of troops might have held it, and did hold it, against all that the garrison of Paris could do.

At Aulnay, going eastward, one first came among the Royal Saxons of the 12th Army Corps. The Saxons occupying Aulnay were the 108th Regiment, the Schützen-Regiment, a few days afterwards so cut up before Villiers, clean-made, sprightly fellows, with much the style about them of our Rifle Brigade, only that their uniform is a little smarter. The German soldiers, Prussians, Saxons, Bavarians, and Würtembergers, alike were fond of exercising a quaint wit in the matter of inscriptions. Sometimes it was grim, not to say profane, as witness a legend I read at Noisseville, before Metz. The legend was on a wooden cross, and the wooden cross seemed to be at the head of a grave; but the grave was a dummy, and was but a decoy to the mine that underlay it at the exposed corner of the *repli*. To complete the illusion, the pioneer had painted in large characters the customary, "Hier ruhen in Gott," and then added, in smaller letters, "90 Pfund preussisches Pulver." Over a pump in Aulnay here which was in a recess I noticed the mocking in-

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scription, "Bier Salon;" a little further on there were two bronze lions rampant on the pillars of a gateway. The head of each was surmounted by the helmet of a French cuirassier of the Guard, and from the embrace of the fore paws there stuck a chassepot.

Prince George of Saxony seemed to rule his army corps without much state or fussiness. I saw no liveries in Le Vert Galant, only one gendarme and an aide-de-camp going along at a walk. From the proximity of the Forest of Bondy to the French lines the 12th Corps came in for most of the first fruits of whatever oozed out from Paris. At Prince George's head-quarters the staff got a reading of the Paris newspapers before they were sent in to Margency, and they had also the cream of the spies, if such a sour-milk profession can be said to have any cream. Le Vert Galant is a village bearing a considerable resemblance to Le Bourget, only it was not shattered, and it has more châteaux in its neighbourhood. The good people of Saxony seemed to look after their soldier relatives with great attention. Just as I got into Le Vert Galant, a convoy of Liebesgaben had arrived from Leipsic under the charge of four representatives of the committee of that city. Fifty waggons had been required to transport the consignment from Château Thierry; so it may be conceived what a show the love-gifts made piled up in the capacious shed. This was the second contribution, too. There were spirits, wines, cigars, and tobacco, warm woollen garments, soaps, matches, biscuits, pens, paper, and that sweeping variety of odds and ends which the word "sundries" comprehends.

"The German Organization." How much we have heard of that lately from all sorts of different sources, its excellence, its promptitude, how it never breaks down under any strain. Among others, I have borne tribute to

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its merits, but the most whimsical tribute I ever heard was exacted from a Briton who was with the head-quarters of Prince George of Saxony. I had the story from the gentleman himself. He had been dining with Prince George, and was on his way to his quarters along the causeway. On his road, he came upon a provision waggon, one of whose wheels had broken, and the concern was in the mud. Not for long though; presently the waggoner produced another wheel in a matter-of-fact way which seemed to convey that he had an unlimited quantity of extra wheels on hand. The new wheel was put on, and the waggon rolled. Our countryman, comparatively a new comer, had heard much of the German organization. Here, to his hand, as if he had ordered the rehearsal, was a specimen. Far away from a wheelwright, a waggon suddenly breaks a wheel at midnight; so thorough is the organization, that a new wheel is on and the vehicle is under way again in less than ten minutes. Our countryman followed Captain Cuttle's counsel by making a note of this illustration, intending, no doubt, after the manner of a Briton, to write about it to his newspaper. Before going into his house, he happened to look into a shed which had been allocated as the dwelling-house of a gig, in which he had a few days before invested. The wheel of his gig was gone. It was the wheel of his gig that he had seen stuck on to the proviant waggon. He went to bed, trying, as he might, to digest this last phase of his illustration of the "German organization."

Returning to Margency on the morning of the 29th, I learned that two posts of a line of telegraph wires between Argenteuil and Bezons, near the former place, had been felled during the night, evidently by malice. As it happened, the wires were on a French track which had not

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been utilised by the Germans, and therefore no actual harm had been done, except to Argenteuil, which, in accordance with the regulations in such cases made and provided, would have to pay severely for the folly of one of its inhabitants, who would have been hanged if he could have been found. The French were reported to be still pottering over the construction of the materials intended for the repair of the bridge at Bezons, but in a dilettante way that indicated little heart. On the previous morning intelligence had reached head-quarters that orders had been given for the gates of Paris to be closed, with intent that a sortie should be made by the troops outside the enceinte—a measure (the closure of the gates I mean, not the sortie) rendered necessary by reason of the crowds of spectators that insisted on witnessing every demonstration of the kind.

In the afternoon I rode westward in the direction of Bezons and Sartrouville. On the front, immediately below head-quarters, things were comparatively quiet. A tremendously heavy fire had been heard during the night, Valérien seemingly leading off the ball, and the direction whence came the sound appeared to indicate that the firing must have been taken up all along the southern side. The din, I was informed, had been as sustained and continuous as that of the cannonade in a general engagement. When I reached Argenteuil, it became evident that the Frenchmen over the way were in a powder-burning humour. There was quite a lively little fusillade going on from the opposite bank in the orchards and gardens which slope down from Colombes to the waterside. The guns from the batteries at Nanterre and before Courbevoie were booming away at measured intervals, sending their shells crashing into the lower part of Argenteuil, while the peasants worked placidly in the

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fields within easy range, with the courage either of despair or of obtuseness. Outside Argenteuil, on the Sartrouville road, a peasant hailed me in the road, and told me that the previous evening, about six o'clock, his wife had been wounded in one of the streets of Argenteuil, and now lay in a house a little above where we stood. Monsieur was not a Prussian militaire? No, I was not. And, pardon, but Monsieur is not then a *curé*? This peasant must have been a very cautious man, determined to make quite sure of his ground. Monsieur could with a clear consciousness disavow the clerical profession. Then for sure Monsieur must be a doctor. I am not aware that I am addicted to washing my hands with invisible soap and water, which I have been given to understand is the shibboleth of doctorhood; and I could not own the soft impeachment. But there is something fascinating in being taken for a doctor, whether the case is of a woman who has fainted in the streets, or one who has been wounded at the foreposts. I believe I did not repudiate M.D. ship with so much plainness as I had done the other professions. Monsieur must at least come and see the poor woman. To this, nobody with a spark of humanity could have had any objection. I found a woman of about fifty years of age sitting in a chair over a fire, in a state of considerable fever. The bullet had struck her forearm as it was stretched out in gesticulation, had, so far as I could make out, shattered both the bones below the elbow, then run up the bone into the shoulder, and finally lodged just on the lip of the shoulder-blade, where I could feel it quite easily, with nothing but the skin between it and daylight. I did what I could with pillows and other rough and ready appliances to make the poor creature somewhat more comfortable, and left her with the promise that I should send her a German

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military surgeon from Argenteuil. She had fevered, and it was sad to hear her half-delirious talk. She had a son a soldier, inside Paris, and she seemed to have a morbid fondness for brooding over the fanciful supposition that it might have been a bullet fired by the son which struck the mother. Strange war, of which such things were among the possibilities.

Returning towards head-quarters, I was in time to see the Crown Prince of Saxony pass in review two regiments of Uhlans of the Guard, who had returned from the other side of the Oise, having been replaced there by a larger body of soldiery. The regiments were in a state of the most thorough efficiency: men and horses alike were in the very pink of condition. An opinion I observe prevailed in England that a Uhlan is a light-cavalry man, and that his ubiquity is owing to his lightness. The fact is, that the Uhlans are heavy cavalry, coming next in ponderosity to the Cuirassiers. Roughly, the relations between the German and the British cavalry may be said to be the following:—German Cuirassiers equal to our Household troops, but with an infusion of slightly shorter men; Uhlans, equal to British heavy cavalry, *i. e.*, 1st and 2nd Dragoons and 4th and 5th Dragoon Guards; Prussian Dragoons and Hussars, corresponding to British intermediate cavalry (viz., the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 6th, and 7th Dragoon Guards and the Enniskillens) and the British Light Cavalry (Hussars and Lancers). The Prussians have no cavalry the men of which are uniformly so light as our distinctively light-cavalry regiments.

We were at a disadvantage in Margency as regarded war news from outside the range of the Maas Army. There came in the shape of speedy information only what the Versailles people thought proper to transmit by telegraph; and as regards sortie-making not on our own

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face of the siege, we had, at least for a day or so, to trust to our ears and to our acuteness in speculation. Our ears, too, did not have quite a fair chance in the matter. All the sound of firing came to us, in whatever quarter it might have been occurring, through one gap —the narrow valley between the hill of Orgimont and Sannois. Whether Romainville was speaking, or whether it was Mont Valérien "*qui donnait*," the distant din came booming to us up through this gap. It was possible to localise the firing somewhat by the exhaustive process. If there were no communications from the right or left of the Maas army, nor any telegrams, then we knew there had been no attack upon any section of it. If Mont Valérien was quiet, that was evidence that the work was not on the west; and so by this process we got at the fact that a cannonade under such circumstances must be on the south.

Wednesday, Nov. 30th, marked the commencement of an important epoch in the siege of Paris. The beleaguered city began its grand effort to break the cordon which surrounded it. On our northern side demonstrations only were made—attempts successful enough to the extent to which they probably aspired, that of keeping the besiegers in play, and preventing reinforcements from being hurried to the scene of the sortie that was really meant. There raged a heavy and continuous cannonade from all the forts, but it was only at one point on the north side where the French infantry broke cover in imposing force. What occurred on the eastern side on the 30th I had not the opportunity of seeing, on account at once of the distance and of the threatening aspect on the northern side. Before, then, making any reference thereto let me narrate just what I did see.

From a very early hour in the morning it was apparent

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that there was hot work in the west. Mont Valérien was quite eruptive from the very smallest of the small hours, thundering away with a laudable impartiality as to the direction in which it sent its projectiles. Before daylight I had ridden forward to the top of Mont d'Orgimont, overhanging Argenteuil, and from this position had an excellent opportunity of observing this exceptional activity. It seemed to me that as day broke quite a battle must be in progress somewhere by Ville d'Avray, on the south side of Valérien, and directly in the track between it and Versailles. The crash of heavy guns was almost continuous, and when there was a brief interval in their deep bass the sharper sound of musketry firing came fainter on the morning wind. It struck me that while the cannonade was an all-round one in this direction, there was, besides the point somewhere about Ville d'Avray, another actual fight going on nearer me in the direction of Bougival. I could dimly distinguish down in the low ground in that direction columns of troops, and the frosty mist of the morning was made denser by the white smoke of the small arms. Closer to me, and in what I regarded as my own province, the work was very warm. From early morning shells from the batteries at Nanterre and Courbevoie had been crashing into Bezons and Argenteuil. The sheltered road behind the latter town was scored in many places with the deep ruts made by shells. The bank on the French side was lined by their infantry, who had kept up a pattering fire into the darkness. In the anticipation of an attempt to restore the bridge at Bezons, to which I have already referred, the troops occupying that town, Argenteuil, and the intermediate posts, had stood to their arms, but had made no effort to reply to a fire which seemed so purposeless, and was doing so little harm. On the eminence

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where I stood, the batteries on the other side kept up an unremitting fire. The shells ploughed its summit up in all directions, and the buildings which crown it were knocked about remorselessly. As day broke it became too dangerous a position, notwithstanding its great advantages as a point of outlook, and I was compelled to evacuate it, and retreat into the low ground beyond. It was out of the frying-pan into the fire. If I went east the shells from La Briche were tumbling into Epinay, St. Gratien, and Deuil. Montmagny and Stains were evidently having rough times of it at the hands of the Fort du Nord; further round Dugny and Le Bourget were receiving marks of the distinguished consideration of Fort de l'Est. Before returning to head-quarters, I went some distance to the west, to a point on the road westward from Argenteuil, which commands a view of Colombes and Courbevoie.

While I stood here, behind the angle of a wall, noting how alert the French sharpshooters on the opposite bank were in peppering at even a single man who exposed himself, I heard behind me the jingle of harness, and, looking round, beheld to my amazement the Union Jack waving in the wind. The old rag fluttered from a staff that was sticking in the front of a fourgon, and side by side with it waved the red cross flag. In front rode two gentlemen with the red cross brassard on their arm. The two gentlemen were Mr. J. S. Young (of the Army Control Department), superintending the English ambulance in St. Germain; and Captain Furley, a well-known and energetic member of the National Society. It was Mr. Young to whom I had written describing the condition of the lazarette in the Château Ecouen, and begging for some help for the poor fever-smitten fellows who lay there. Mr. Young immediately on the receipt of my

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letter made his preparations with promptitude and zeal; Captain Furley's invaluable co-operation was enlisted in the cause, and here were the two with their waggon load of good things behind them, jogging quietly through the fire on their way to Ecouen. You can easily imagine how delighted I was to see them, and how pleased I was to know that, in consequence of my representations relief was about to reach a spot where it was so badly needed. It was thoroughly British—the cool quietude with which the little procession pegged on steadily on the path of duty, heedless of the chassepot bullets that came singing past them from the Frenchmen over the water. Here was the road; that was enough for our countrymen. To reach Ecouen it had to be traversed, and the dangers by the way were simply part of the day's work. Further on, while passing between Montmorency and Sarcelles, the shells dropped profusely about the waggon, but fortunately without any casualty. I accompanied Mr. Young and Captain Furley to the headquarters of the Crown Prince, at Margency, where they met with a very warm reception from the gentlemen of the staff. Of the reception they experienced at Ecouen I shall speak presently.

From Margency I accompanied a staff officer through Montmorency to Montmagny, and round to Gonesse on the swell between Garges and Bonneuil, and Stains, Pierrefitte, and Dugny. For the first time during the siege Du Nord was throwing shells into Montmorency, which was imagined out of range. It made one nervous to hear them whizzing by us and bursting behind us in Sarcelles, as we were cantering up the *chaussée* toward Pierrefitte. I don't think the northern forts of Paris ever squandered so much fire as on this day. It seemed to me that they simply let drive in every direction, content

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to know that a shell was off somewhere. We were just in time to witness from the ridge a sortie toward Stains, a village the exceptional position of which I explained in a recent letter. Three battalions came over the flat against it, supported by a close and sustained fire from Fort du Nord and the Lunette de Stains. The village was garrisoned by the 2nd regiment of the Guard and a battalion of the Queen Elizabeth's. The French troops, two battalions of Mobile Guards and one of the French line, came on with great resolution and in excellent order, notwithstanding that a German field battery in an emplacement to our left dropped shells among them with beautiful precision. But the German Guards were waiting for them, and received them with a steady fire at short range. The Frenchmen tried a rush; but the bullets met them in the teeth, and checked their impetus. After holding their ground for a little while, exchanging shots with the Guardsmen, the exposed position had the inevitable result, and a retrograde movement set in. The French, however, deserve great credit for the regular manner in which they effected their retreat.

There was another demonstration in the direction of Le Bourget at a later hour. Dense columns of French troops showed on the plain in front of Fort Aubervilliers, and advanced steadily in the direction of Le Bourget. But they lost heart before they got near the piquet in the railway station, and never came close enough to give the men behind the main barricade a chance at them. Le Bourget, however, already pounded with shells, had a fresh dose of the same physic all day; and when we were away in the east at Gonesse, the French had burst out of St. Denis, and had actually taken Epinay, although they were unable to hold it. The fire from La Briche had been all day so strong that it was necessary in Epinay

to huddle very close under cover; and no doubt the battalion of the 71st, which was on duty in it, was in a measure taken by surprise by the suddenness and fury with which the French attacked. They burst out of St. Denis at the double about half-past three P.M., and simultaneously a gunboat with a strong detachment of sailors darted out from behind Fort La Briche, and came steaming down the Seine. The vessel, as it came down stream, swept the banks clear of the German outposts with its fire, and landed its cargo at Epinay just as the troops arrived that had come by *terra firma*. Of these there were six battalions—four of linesmen, two of Mobiles. The houses by the river-side and round to the west side of the village were occupied, and the 71st at least half surrounded before it had well realised the fact that it was attacked. It had got so late that no sortie was anticipated. While the French were crossing the plain the German batteries on the crest in front of Montmorency played upon them with considerable effect. A lodgment having been effected in the village by a force so immensely superior, nothing remained for the battalion of the 71st but to extricate itself, with as much credit as possible, from its awkward plight. It evacuated the village, fighting as it retreated, and fell back toward St. Gratien. Here it found immediate reinforcement. The French utilised the time by barricading themselves in Epinay, and making preparations to give a warm reception to the force which should attempt to retake it. That force consisted of the whole of the 15th Brigade, the 71st and 31st Regiments, in all six battalions, with three companies of the 26th Regiment lent by the 16th Brigade. The whole belonged to the 8th Division, which was commanded by General von Schöler. A rapid march was made on Epinay, the ardour of which the French were unable to baulk, and

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the place was retaken after having been held by the French not quite two hours. The loss of the Germans was very considerable, to be accounted for from the fact that they were the assailants in the second act of the piece. There were killed outright between forty and fifty men and five officers. The wounded were about 135 men and eight officers. It was at first believed the French were able to carry off no prisoners, although one officer and several men were reported missing; but it was thought likely they might be lying either killed or wounded in some of the unexplored houses. Although some were thus found, others could not be accounted for; and it was afterwards learned that six men were captured and taken back by the French into St. Denis. On the other hand, about forty French soldiers, chiefly linesmen, were taken prisoners by the Germans. I saw them in Montmorency next morning. They seemed in very good case, strong, fresh, and healthy, with no appearance of privation. It was a feature of this affair in Epinay that a party of the 71st, under the command of an Vicefeldwebel, held a house in the village during the whole time of the French occupation, and successfully resisted repeated efforts on the part of the French to drive them out. Their comrades thought them lost; and it was an agreeable surprise to find the staunch little garrison still holding their billet, and that without material loss. The wounded from Epinay were brought in the first instance to St. Gratien, where the chateau of Princess Demidoff was converted for the time into an hospital. The position, however, was too exposed, it being within easy range of St. Briche, and therefore the poor fellows were next morning removed further back—some to Montmorency, but the greater number to Eaubonne. Those who could bear the transport were sent to Germany as soon as possible.

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The German loss in the sortie on Stains was inconsiderable. The Guards had only to defend the place; it was different with the French, who had to expose themselves in the plain on the way to the attack, and during its progress. Shells fell on the 30th November at a greater range than it had been believed the guns of the French forts were capable of carrying. Before then Montmorency had never been touched by a shell, and it was believed to be just out of range. But on the 30th the shells not only came crashing into Montmorency, but even fell behind it—a range of somewhere about 6300 metres. In all, seventy-two shells on the 30th fell in Montmorency. I heard of but one casualty from all this pounding: a line officer was wounded.

Dr. Tegener received the English ambulance with great enthusiasm. The tears were in his eyes as he shook hands with Mr. Young and Captain Furley. On my arrival at a later hour he fairly embraced me. The stores were carried into his own room, and as the box of sundries was unpacked it was glorious to watch the delight of the good old man. "Porter," "Ganz gut!" "Ale," "Ganz gut!" "Chloroform," "Ach Gott!" "Twelve hundred cigars," "Du lieber Gott!" and the hands and eyes went up in delight. The subscribers to the Society should have seen the sick men taking their first dose of the generous port, and smoking their first cigar. The sight would have been ample reward to Mr. Young and Captain Furley had they run greater risks than they did to bring the good things round. The woollen clothing must, I believe, have saved many lives. When convalescents are sent out from hospital to forepost-work, still weak and unseasoned, and thinly clad, they went down almost inevitably with rheumatism; but with the warm jackets and drawers of the Society they could brave

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with impunity the hardest weather. In the society of the Medical Staff we three Engländers spent a right pleasant evening over a bowl of punch, compounded by the joint efforts of the apothecaries, of materials not drawn from the stores for the sick. After supper Dr. Tegener asked everybody to dedicate a bumper to a toast which he was about to give, and then the good man made quite a little speech. Here is the purport of it:—"Gentlemen, —there are some people—we have indeed seen specimens of the species—who go about and make large and sweeping promises which are never fulfilled. What an example of the contrary we have now before us! There came here casually the other day *unser lieber* (the writer of these lines). He saw our state, and on the spot he wrote to his countryman, Mr. Young, at St. Germain, recounting what he had seen, and begging him to act. Mr. Young lets no red tape stand in his way. He and Captain Furley here put their heads together, and now this afternoon, without any bother, any previous correspondence, there comes jogging up our avenue a waggon bringing what is health—nay, what is life—to our poor sick. Here is the Engländer all over, gentlemen—the bulldog, that has no wind to spare in superfluous barking." Then the doctor went for a little down a side lane to prove that the English and the Germans were brethren, and that a mutual affection was natural; and wound up by calling for vociferous "Hochs" for the English ambulance. Captain Furley responded in a few graceful words, that were evidently not "from the teeth outward." Mr. Young contributed vocally to the harmony of the evening; and I, who could neither make a speech nor sing a song, had to concentrate my energies on the punch and cigars. And so passed our St. Andrew's night very merrily, for as yet we knew not that doings had been enacted in the

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day-time that, had we known of them, would have made mirth not only unseemly but impossible.

The great sortie on the south and south-east was to have been essayed on the 29th November, and was arranged, as it appeared, to consist of a combined attack on the parts of Generals Vinoy and Ducrot. Vinoy had to deal with the southern section, his eruption taking place from Villejuif and Vitry against Choisy-le-Roi and up the valley of the Seine. Ducrot had the valley of the Marne for his theatre of offensive operations. The combination failed, in consequence, as was afterwards ascertained, of a characteristic miscalculation, want of foresight as to the length of pontooning required for bridging the Marne, swollen as that stream was. The explanation of the blunder was that an exceptional quantity of water had been turned into the stream, either through neglect of the sluice arrangements higher up, on the part of the functionaries whose duty it was to attend to their management, or through a cunning device of the Germans, who, it was said, first dammed the water and then let out the accumulation, with intent to hinder and hamper the efforts of the French to bridge the stream lower down. There was no foundation for the latter supposition: any action of this kind on the part of the Germans would have seriously inconvenienced themselves, as interfering with the efficiency of their bridges at Chelles and Cournay; in addition to which obvious fact, I had the positive assurance that nothing of the kind had been thought of. The former is an absurdity on the face of it. The sluices on the Marne are designed, not to regulate the quantity of water in the river, but are in the nature of locks to facilitate the passage of vessels going up stream over shallows and rapids, which are ingeniously localised, so that each lock suffices to neutralise a rapid, and conducts

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from one long placid reach into another at a single step. The navigation on the stream having been suspended on account of the hostile occupation, these locks were simply left open: throughout the whole distance from Dormans to Chelles I never saw the gates of one closed. Thus the volume of water flowed without interruption, whether it was great or small; that it was greater than Ducrot's pontoneers had reckoned for was owing to freshets in the upper part of the valley. And under no hypothesis can it be disputed that one of the rudiments of the art of military bridge construction is to leave a margin for the contingency of a swollen stream, from whatever cause the increase might arise. In so far, then, as the failure in the arranged combination between Vinoy and Ducrot for the 29th was ascribable to the default in the bridge accommodation at the service of the army of the latter, the failure was utterly inexcusable, and reflects greater discredit on the military character of those at whose door it lies than any other episode in the defence of Paris. Vinoy's effort of the 29th against the 6th Army Corps failed utterly; and it fell to Ducrot to make his effort the day after, unassisted by the distraction which the former, according to the plan of action, was meant to afford, and which, but for the blunder referred to, it certainly would have afforded. It is a bad omen in such cases when a general has to begin offensive operations with the acknowledgment, *Perdidi diem.* It cannot be denied, however, that on the 30th he tried his best to make up for the lost time. By daybreak his troops, having for the most part crossed in the night, were pushing in the Würtemberg and Saxon outposts on the horseshoe-like peninsula, under cover of a heavy fire from Avron, Forts Nogent and Charenton, and the redoubts of La Faisanderie and Gravelle. I am writing now from

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what I was able to learn of this affair after it was over, for I did not reach the ground on which it took place till the morning of the 2nd December. On this account I reserve topographical detail till I come to deal with this latter event; nor, as not having been an eye-witness, can I claim thorough accuracy as to the details of what passed on the 30th. The Würtembergers on the 29th had occupied the whole of the line across the peninsula as far as Noisy-le-Grand, which was the left flank post of the Saxons, and were being partially replaced by the Saxons, when the French attack was made. A "dislocation," in fact, was in progress; and although in theory an operation of this kind, instead of weakening a force along the line where it is being performed, should indeed double the strength, since the relieved and relievers should be on the ground at one and the same time, yet in practice, especially if the line is somewhat attenuated by its length, the force to be relieved not unfrequently anticipates, partly at least, in its departure the advent of the relief. In such a case the temporary weakness must be apparent; and in any case a "dislocation" is productive inevitably of a certain amount of confusion. Abraham Lincoln's adage, "It is a bad time for changing horses when fording a stream," is extremely applicable to relieving operations performed in the very teeth of an attack by an enemy in force. I think everything points to the conclusion that the French, tardy as their movements were in losing the whole of the 29th, succeeded to a great extent, after all, in surprising the Würtembergers and the Saxons in that daybreak attack of theirs on the 30th. Brie was soon in the hands of the French. Then they spread out like a fan, their left threatening Noisy, their centre looking straight at Villiers, their right, in great strength, being already in possession of Cham-

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pigny. They had hurled the Würtembergers back on that village with a rush, while at the same time they had taken it in flank on the south side; and although there was some desperate fighting on the part of the South Germans to hold the place, yet they were utterly overpowered and driven back by sheer dint of superior weight. Villiers was not so easily gained by the French. It stands higher, has better defensive capacities, and they had been more carefully utilised. Here I may state that after the pinch on the south-east was over, and comparative quietude had been restored, I was informed on authority which commanded attention that the Würtembergers had been somewhat lax as well as unskilful in their attention to the artificial defences of the extreme front of their position. It certainly seemed to one going over the ground after the fighting was over that eligible positions had not been utilised, and that there was a want of that continuity and thoroughness of defensive works noticeable in the front of the country of the Guards and the Saxons. Confirmation of what I have alluded to might seem to be found in the elaborate system of defences the construction of which was set about as soon as the French had fallen back from the positions they had temporarily occupied. But to return to Villiers. A Würtemberger battery stood in front of an emplacement at the corner of the park in the village, and served for a considerable time, supported as it was by the strenuous efforts of an infantry force which was unfortunately but too scanty, in staving off the rush of the French. It suffered severely from the fire of Nogent, and ultimately the infantry supports had withdrawn from it; but the gunners stood to their guns with admirable persistence. The French were no less obstinate in their assault, and the spectacle was presented of a single unsupported

battery blazing into the teeth of a strong attacking force with shrapnel shells at point-blank range of 300 yards. When so small a distance separated the foes, the fire of Nogent had to be suspended, and it seemed as if the battery was holding its own; but at the critical moment its ammunition was exhausted, and the gallant gunners, in default of supplies, had no alternative but to fall back. Then, with no inconsiderable amount of obstinate street-fighting, Villiers fell into the hands of the French, and the situation assumed a very alarming aspect. Having used Champigny as a kind of base of concentration, the French had streamed up the slope of Mont Mesly beyond, and actually were on its summit. But further they could not get. Reitzenstein's brigade of Würtembergers (the 1st) held the heights beyond in force, along with all the available artillery of the division; and this sufficed to stay the advance of the French beyond Mont Mesly, removed as they were from the covering fire of the forts. They were very stubborn, however, and it was not until late in the afternoon that they relaxed their efforts to gain more ground, and until the opportunity had arrived, in the opinion of General Obernitz, for directing Reitzenstein to alter his tactics and assume the counter-offensive. Meanwhile three regiments (the 104th, 106th, and 107th) of Nehrhoff's division of Saxons (24th) had got into position behind Villiers, and covering Noisy. Villiers had cost the French so dear, that they were not prepared immediately to pursue the offensive on their getting possession of that village, and, after a pause of some duration in the active operations on this section of the battle-field, Nehrhoff availed himself of what seemed a good opening for an attempt to retake the village. The duty was entrusted to the 47th Brigade, commanded by Colonel von Abendroth, who had assumed the brigadier-general-

ship in succession to General von Schulz, who had been wounded at Sedan. In all the Saxon army there is no gallanter officer than the colonel of the 106th. He in person commanded the two battalions that made the assault on Villiers. The French had been utilising their occupancy, and already a barricade had been thrown up, which the Saxons carried at the point of the bayonet. The fighting was close, sustained, and desperate, all through the village street; but the Saxons stubbornly fought their way, and supports poured in behind the men in the forefront of the battle. I believe Abendroth succeeded in clearing the village. It is certain he took about 250 prisoners, chiefly in the houses at the end nearest the park. But this park was virtually part of the village, and till it was retaken the position could not be said to have been retrieved. Abendroth had gone down, his horse pierced with four bullets. His adjutant gave him a fresh mount, and the colonel was hardly in the saddle before it, too, was shot, and he on the ground. Scrambling up, as an eye-witness told me, the gallant old soldier headed the attack on foot, which was made on the park held so stubbornly by the French. The fighting was long and fierce in this neighbourhood, and the result I never could learn with that exactitude which was desirable. I was informed authoritatively, on the one hand, that on the night of the 30th the Saxons held Villiers, having recovered it by the attack of which I have been writing; but there was a want of explicit candour in communicating the details that was not altogether satisfactory. From other sources, and, indeed, from the men engaged, I gathered, on the other hand, that on the night of the 30th Villiers was only partly occupied by the Saxons, while the further end of it, including the park I have referred to, was beyond question in French occupation;

and French prisoners taken on the 2nd asserted unhesitatingly that on the night in question Villiers was entirely in the hands of the French, they having recovered the place at nightfall, when Abendroth's men fell back. I incline to place belief in the veracity of the second of these three statements, and assume that Villiers was only wholly evacuated in the course of the following day (the 1st of December). But there can be no question about Champigny, notwithstanding that great frankness on the subject was not displayed by the head-quarter staff of the 12th Army Corps. Close on nightfall Reitzenstein's Würtembergers had cleared the intervening ground, and, well supported by field artillery, made a very energetic attempt to retake the village; but it met with a most stubborn resistance; and the Würtembergers not only could get no foothold in the place, but the Mobiles defending it succeeded in recovering some of the ground they had lost in the direction of Mont Mesly, and they employed the night in fortifying the position and in throwing up earthworks outside the village, to render yet more difficult another attempt on the part of the Würtembergers to recapture it.

The 1st of December was, as I take it, a day of forced inaction on both sides. The Germans were certainly not prepared to take the initiative on that day. During the first half of it a kind of informal armistice existed for the purpose of removing the wounded and burying the dead —a task which neither side, so far as I could gather, performed with the thoroughness which was desirable. The French utilised the tranquillity by digging potatoes on the blood-stained field, and in stripping the flesh off the carcases of killed horses which strewed its surface.

The *rationale* of the French tactics on the 30th November is not far to seek. There was the sortie on the

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west, one on the south against the 6th Army Corps, other two at distinct points in the north, and yet another threatened one in Le Bourget, all meant as feints and distractions; and there was the great and seriously meant one on the east, on to the horseshoe. It may surely be safely assumed that the intention of the besieged was to break through at the latter point, and at once relieve Paris of superfluous mouths, and let loose a field army to hang on the rear of the besiegers, and co-operate with the army of the Loire. Had the attempt been successful, its success would have gone far to raise the siege of Paris, at all events for a time. But the iron grip of the German was too strong. The history of the siege of Paris is the history of the siege of Metz over again. The Germans threw their cordon round and round, they chose their ground, they planted their feet firmly down upon it, and held to it with a grim, quiet, terribly inflexible tenacity. The French inside having lost the comparative chance open to them in the early days, while as yet the German foot had not settled itself quite surely on the ground, were now beating themselves furiously on the stern barrier that surrounded them, all impotent, notwithstanding the unquestionable conduct and spirit which they demonstrated, to hew a gap quite through that barrier.

Such was the position on the 1st December. Would the French gather heart for another effort? Would they sulkily abide behind their ramparts till the last biscuit was eaten; or would they let reason speak to them, and, recognising the double fact that they could not raise the siege, and that its maintenance inevitably entailed upon them the horrors of starvation, would they avert that misery by a timely and honourable capitulation? These were the questions all were canvassing on the northern

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side, while the Saxons and Würtembergers were drawing a long breath, and bracing themselves for the struggle that their eyes told them was close. The morrow brought at once the answer to the question and the renewal of the struggle.

After the storm of the 30th November came the calm —a short-lived one—of the 1st of December. On the former day, the air had throbbed and vibrated with the continuous din of the artillery; on the latter, not the sound of a single gun-shot came to break the stillness. The guns of the forts must have got very hot before the firing was over, somewhere about midnight. Their cooling had been helped during the night-watches by a keen frost, which hardened the ground and covered the ponds with a thin film of ice.

On the morning of the 1st Captain Furley and Mr. Young visited the railway station at Villers le Bel, to inspect the hospital train which was just on the point of starting for Berlin. I have read assertions that the Germans cared assiduously for the fighting-man so long as he was in a state to fight, but that when he became *hors de combat* the care ceased, and the useless man, rendered useless by wounds or sickness, was neglected. This train was in itself a conclusive reply to the calumny. It was a locomotive hospital. The beds were in two tiers along the sides of the carriages—beds furnished with every imaginable device for the comfort of the occupant. There was an apothecary-shop compartment, and another carriage which was a most convenient and admirably arranged kitchen. The train had its living cargo on board —men fit for the journey, culled from the field lazarettes all round the north and east sides of the besieging line. While the steam was getting up, there they were lapping their beef tea, made for them in the kitchen waggon, the

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hospital orderlies performing their duties just as in the hospital. One fellow told Captain Furley that he was so comfortable that he cared very little whether his journey lasted a week or a month. On their way back to St. Germain my countrymen picked up my female patient at Argenteuil, to transport her into a civil hospital in the former town. I cannot quit the subject of the English ambulance visit without bearing testimony to the promptness and efficiency of the performance. To travel to and fro some twenty-five miles either way in two days indicates a high state of efficiency; and it ought not to be forgotten that for quite half of this distance the road was under a very heavy fire. Between St. Brice and Sarcelles the men, horses, and waggon were twice spattered with a shower of earth caused by the explosion of shells in the field which they were skirting. I could not help being tickled at the sight of Captain Furley and Mr. Young coolly exchanging cigar-lights just at this interesting stage of the proceedings.

Between four and five o'clock on the morning of the 2nd, a good friend came to my bedside with sure information that at daybreak an attempt was to be commenced by the Saxons and Würtembergers to drive the French out of the villages of Brie and Champigny, which they had occupied since the day before but one. The strategical value to the besiegers of those villages was of only a negative kind, while Brie formed an eligible *tête du pont* for the French, and Champigny was invaluable to them as opening up the southern exit from the horseshoe. Under these circumstances, the intention, as resolved on at head-quarters, was not alone to drive the French out of the two villages, but burn them both, so that they should not in future be available as shelters or places from which to make head. I was in the saddle in half

an hour, and out on the long and weary road, eager to be in time for what I knew was coming.

Past Montmorency, with its trim châteaux all silent, its hill with the white house on its summit standing out against the moonlit sky, with the lake of Enghien at my feet, sleeping placidly in the flood of white light. Just as I passed the now forlorn and abandoned dwelling that was once the hermitage of Jean Jacques Rousseau—boom, boom—there came five shells, one after the other, from Fort Du Nord, as if Paris should say to the besiegers on the north side, "Remember, although I mean hard fighting on the east, you are not to think that I am not thoroughly on the alert all round; so don't attempt concentrations, if you are wise." Through the vineyards to Sarcelles, and over behind Stains by the near cut, so swept by the shells the day before but one; past Dugny, where the Guardsmen were snoring in a full-nosed chorus, trusting implicitly and with all safety, to the alertness of their comrades on sentry. On across the *chaussée* before Pont Iblon, whence the Queen Elizabeths sallied out for that desperate rush of theirs to retake Le Bourget; past the broad inundation on the left, across it into Aulnay, with the brass helmets on the stone lions; on through Sevran, and down into Livry, where I found the Kaiser Franz Guardsmen occupying the old quarters of the Saxon Schützen Regiment. Now a sweep to the right into dangerous ground by Clichy, and forward through the felled forest and the labyrinth of earthwork that crown the summit of the Forest of Bondy above Montfermeil. Before I had reached this spot the sombre music of the cannon had begun to play. First came one sullen boom, and a simultaneous flash through the morning twilight from the lofty side of Fort Rosny, then a dull chaos of noise, as from the guns on the newer works of Avron,

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further to the south. After this overture, which was performed about seven o'clock, there was no intermission in the din. The air seemed thick with the sound of the terrible cannonade, and at times it was as if a gust struck against one's face, when some huge gun emptied itself into space. There was a sublimity in the roar, such as could be produced by no bicker of mere field artillery. From Montfermeil my way lay down between the two heights into Chelles, where I found the Saxons in force —the 103rd Regiment garrisoning the town, and ready for anything that might take place on their immediate front. But Chelles was not the theatre of action this morning. The day before but one it had got a benefit in the shape of some 200 shells, which represented simply the waste of so much ammunition, since not a man was hurt. Some special providence must surely have protected a field-watch commanded by Hauptmann von Zanthier, in the front of Chelles. The shells actually rained about it, exploding in front, at the sides, and in the rear, but never a one came into the little post where the Saxon captain lay with his men.

On quitting Chelles I took the wrong road, following the *chaussée* towards Neuilly, till convincing argument proved to me that I was out of the track. Before this road will be eligible again for traffic it will require to be relaid with fresh blocks of granite. A heavy shell bursting on the hard causeway produces an absolutely diabolical effect. Iron and stone fly in splinters together, whole blocks are sent into the air, and hurtle outward from the fiery centre as if projected from a gigantic turbine. And it was not one shell that fell on this exposed *chaussée*, but many—so many that, when man and horse were out of the solitude so infernally enlivened, I thought both were lucky in the extreme. Crossing the

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river higher up at Gournay, I learned there that Prince George of Saxony had shifted his head-quarters to Champs on the previous evening, and I found a battle raging fiercely on the tract of broken country to the south-west of that village.

The Marne, beginning at Gournay, runs first nearly due west to a little beyond Noisy-le-Grand, then makes a sweep south, on the eastern bank of which sweep stands the village of Brie, and then forms a couple of loops, near the south of the broad neck of the most northerly of which is the village of Champigny, and further north and some distance to the east the larger village of Villiers-sur-Marne. It was in and around the three villages of Brie, Villiers, and Champigny where had been enacted the bloody drama of the 30th November. When the curtain had fallen on that drama the Saxons stood fast in Villiers, spite of all that the French troops and the French forts could do to dislodge them. Brie and Champigny, lying so close under the lee of Fort Nogent and the strongly armed redoubt of Faisanderie, on the verge of the Forest of Vincennes overhanging Joinville, remained in the hands of the French, for whatever good they were. What this advantage represented was simply this—that Brie gave them a footing, so to speak, on the Saxon mainland, while Champigny formed the key to the district behind the horseshoe formed by the loop of the Marne. Whether the risk, nay the certainty, of the severe loss entailed in an attempt to dislodge the French from positions which may be fairly designated as outworks of their fortifications, deserved to be weighed in the balance, in a military sense, against the advantage to be gained by beating the Frenchmen out of places so protected, is a question the reply to which does not rest with me; but, if it did, I would candidly give it as my opinion that the

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objects of the besiegers would have been equally served by giving their forepost line on this face a wider and a safer sweep. A line drawn from Gournay to Chennevières presents a continuous defensive position of considerable strength, the complement of which might have been found in the utter destruction, by fire and crowbar, of the villages of Noisy, Villiers, and Champigny. Such a line would, at all events, have presented this advantage, that there need have been fewer earth mounds beneath which lie dead children of the Fatherland, beyond it on the side towards the French forts.

But speculations of this kind are as tedious as they must be purposeless. The object of the day on the side of the Germans was to dislodge the French from these villages—Brie and Champigny. To essay this task fell to the lot of Saxons, Würtembergers, and a brigade of the 2nd Army Corps. The Saxons engaged consisted of the second division of the Royal Saxon Army (the 24th division of the German host), under the command of General von Nehrhoff, and composed of the 104th, 105th, 106th, 107th, and 108th Regiments. This, taking each regiment at its full strength of three battalions, would represent fifteen battalions, or about 12,000 men; but as more than one battalion was naturally elsewhere engaged on forepost duty, it may be outside the exact figures to put down the Saxon force engaged at 10,000 men. Before the commencement of operations these splendid troops occupied positions in Noisy, Champs, Gournay, Villiers, and the vicinity. The division of the Würtembergers, the strength of which was considerably less than that of the Saxons, was commanded by General von Obernitz. Their previous positions had been Ormesson, Chennevières, La Queue, Noiseau, and the vicinity. I have spoken of a brigade of the 2nd Army Corps as co-

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operating, but I have reason to believe that this contingent was neither strictly a brigade nor did it amount to a division, but was made up of contributions from various portions of the Army Corps in question. It was commanded by General von Fransecki, who, in virtue of seniority, had the nominal direction of all the operations, which were, however, supervised generally as regarded the Saxons by Prince George in person, whose heedlessness of danger must sorely have tried the nerves of his staff. The contingent from the 2nd Army Corps supported and co-operated with the Würtembergers. The Saxons had no backing but their own resolute valour. In all, the German troops engaged and immediately supporting may have numbered about 22,000. The German programme was complicated more or less unexpectedly by a counter-offensive operation projected by the French against Villiers, no doubt with intentions of penetrating further, and of ultimately breaking through the cordon. Thus it fell out that as the Germans were pressing on to the attempt of driving the French out of Brie and Champigny, Messieurs the French were simultaneously pouring out with intent to take Villiers. When two bodies are going opposite ways in the same groove, it is a law of nature that a collision is the result. When the two bodies are armies, a fight is inevitable. Such events of that fight as came under my personal observation I shall endeavour to recount; but it is necessary first to give a brief description of the nature of the ground on which it took place. On the road to Noisy the south bank of the Marne is low, with a gradual rise, furrowed by inconsiderable rectangular depressions. As one reaches Noisy, which stands on the crest of the rise, and looks southward, he sees towards Villiers, and athwart the neck of the loop, a broad flat upland table-land, affording favour-

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able scope for military evolutions. All along the front of this table-land, on which Villiers stands, and which due west of that village is projected some distance toward the horseshoe, there is a continuous fall, in places shaggy and abrupt, in others cultivated and more gradual, down into the alluvial plain of which the major part of the horseshoe consists.

Toward Brie, which is nearly due east from Noisy, the slope tumbles more rapidly than further to the south. In front of Villiers is a château, inhabited by a courageous French lady, who remained at home throughout the terrible scenes which were being enacted around her habitation. The park around this château is girdled by a wall, of the advantages of which the Saxons had made the most, and in front of it again (I am writing always of the side toward Paris as the front) there were still a few fields and vineyards of level ground before the slope, more gradual about here and to the southward, commenced to fall away down into the plain of the horseshoe. The whole position, of which Villiers was the Hougomont, although it was hampered by occasional broken ground, hedges and brushwood, would have formed no bad standpoint for offering resistance to a force which, having deployed on the plain, was attempting to carry it, if it were not that it was swept by a direct fire from Fort Nogent and the Faisanderie redoubt, at easy range, and enfiladed at longer range, but still effectually, from the batteries on Mont Avron.

When I crossed the river the hour already was considerably past nine. It seemed to me that Noisy-le-Grand was an eligible point from which to observe the operations, and accordingly I directed my way thither. I never wish to travel such a road again, nor to reach such a destination. The shells from Avron were coming very thick.

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Now they fell with a great splash into the Marne at my feet, starring the placid water as a stone stars a mirror; now there was a great bang on the road, and a belch of white smoke or a dull thud on the frosty ground above. If the road was bad, Noisy itself was worse. It seemed as if the gunners in Avron and Nogent were determined that not one stone of it should be left upon another. Now it was a shower of slates, as a shell crashed through a roof, rifting the solid rafters as if they had been laths. Now half the side of a house went over bodily as a huge projectile struck and crunched it. In the shortness of the range, strange to say, there was one element of safety. The fire had to be direct, not plunging; and so massive were the walls, that if one could only manage to get two or three of them between him and the hostile guns, he occupied a position of precarious safety. Brie divided with Noisy the attentions of the French batteries, and Brie was still nearer them than Noisy. I had been told that the 107th Regiment had made a dash into Brie out of Noisy early in the morning, and I wondered much how it fared with them. Hard enough, beyond doubt, but could they hold the place under such a ding-dong pelting? By ten o'clock the question was resolved. First, there came a drove of French prisoners, red-breeched regulars, up towards Noisy, along the slight shelter afforded by the use of the road. Then came Saxon soldiers, more prisoners, and finally the bulk of the 107th, in very open order, and making the most of the few opportunities for cover. It was not a pleasant way to traverse. Nogent was firing heavily upon captors and captured alike, and more than one Frenchman fell slain by missiles hurled from French weapons. As the struggling columns came up I learned that the 107th, in its rapid rush in the morning, had surprised the occupants of Brie;

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some were asleep, others were composedly drinking their coffee. There was but trifling resistance, and nearly five hundred prisoners had been taken, including eight officers. The reason for the relinquishment of Brie on the part of the 107th was not far to seek. The terrible and persistent fire from the forts rendered it utterly untenable. It would have been folly—sheer quixotry—to remain in a place teeming with bursting shells. No good could have been achieved by holding it under such conditions. The troops, compelled, that they might escape annihilation, to concentrate their attention solely on cover, could not possibly have acted in any way on the offensive, in the way of annoying the right flank of the enemy. As this contingency must have been the sole purpose of the continued occupancy, its impracticability simply nullified the position in a strategic sense, while the same reasons prevented effectual steps being taken for firing it. In a physical sense the shells were rapidly nullifying the occupants.

The prisoners looked sturdy fellows, and anything but ill fed. Their heart was good, too, if one might judge from passing expressions. A sergeant bade me "bon jour" as he went by, and told me cheerily that if anyone indulged the anticipation of the speedy capitulation of Paris, he was extremely out in his reckoning. Food was plentiful, he said, with a laugh, and the programme was sorties every day in every direction. I believe it was this laughing philosopher who afterwards gave up a proclamation of General Ducrot, dated the 28th ult., and setting forth that he did not mean to re-enter Paris alive. I dare swear he would not have done so had he chanced about this time to fall into the hands of the Germans. A drum-head court-martial and a volley from a firing-party would assuredly have been his fate, and it would

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have served him right. There was found also, I learned, on one of the prisoners a proclamation emanating from General Trochu, that commander with "plan on the brain," announcing that the time had now come for making great sorties, since the German, or, as he called it, the Prussian line had been greatly weakened (perhaps by the fall of Metz), and that his plan was to peg away at sorties till he had cut his way through. The prisoners were escorted back to Chelles, where, at a late period of the day, I saw them penned in the yard of the Mairie.

As the procession from Brie had finished filing through Noisy an ominous sight met my eye in another direction, as I crept dodgingly forward further to the front. There, on the gradual slope of the further bank of the Marne, under the wing of Fort Nogent and extending right and left along the line of the Chaumont Railway, were dense columns of French infantry. How they came there I knew not; it was as if the spectacle had sprung up by magic. Now they stood fast, closing up as the fronts of the battalions halted; then there was a slow movement forward, till the head of the column dipped out of sight between the village of Nogent and the river. Then there seemed a final halt, and the dense masses stood there, the bayonets glittering in the sun, as if the men who carried them had come out to be spectators of the effects of that shell fire which was cutting the air above their heads. But little by little there was a gradual trickling off, as it appeared, down to the bight of the river between Nogent and Brie. Was there a bridge there? There was the railway bridge, a lofty viaduct whose arches also went across the flat, but there was a gap in one of its river spans that rendered it useless. Presently, on the narrow level to the south of Brie there became visible a knot of red breeches, that grew denser and

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denser every moment. Simultaneously the whole plain sprang into life. From the farm-buildings about Le Tremblay, from Poulangis and Joinville, there poured out vast bodies of French troops, deploying at the double, as they came through under the arches, or showed on the slopes further to the south. The line seemed to extend right athwart the neck of the loop. What happened to Champigny I know not from personal observation; but I was afterwards informed that the Würtembergers, after some desperate fighting, had driven the French out of it not long after eight o'clock, to be in their turn subjected to a violent attack and partial expulsion by the right of the formation to which I have just referred. The tirailleurs dashed into the thickets lining the foot of the rise, and scrambled up through the vinebergs. The mass of troops behind them followed in serried columns. Whence had they come? Some of them had been bivouacking on the plain ever since the 30th. Others had crossed during the night, and occupied the loop by their bridges. Six of these were between Joinville and Nogent, and the nullification of Brie admitted the utilisation, at the later hour, of yet two more between that village and the railway viaduct.

Noisy seemed no place for a non-combatant. By a detour *vid* La Haute Maison, I reached the house named Le Désert, in the immediate rear of Villiers, which evidently was the point for which the French advance was intended. That force—I refer exclusively to the section which threatened Villiers—must have been at least 20,000 strong. How large was the force with which the Würtembergers and their good friends of the 2nd Army Corps had to deal towards Champigny I had no means of even roughly estimating. Surely in those dense columns standing in support under Nogent there could

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not have been less than 20,000 men. But directly and face to face it was with the 20,000 men of the left advance with whom the 10,000 Saxons had to cope. Not with them alone, but with those terrible projectiles also, a storm of which incessantly clashed on to the upper ground on which stands Villiers, and up to the table-land between it and Noisy.

Had there been nothing else to do on the part of the Saxons but to repulse an assault on Villiers, directed solely and straightly against it, the task would have been comparatively simple and not very bloody, notwithstanding the artillery fire. But the French advance, threatening in its deployment as it did to sweep right on, overlapping Villiers, up the space between that village and Noisy, and so to get through upon Champs, called for other tactics. Villiers could only serve as a position on which to lean the Saxon left. It became necessary to meet the French in the open. From behind Villiers the several regiments came out to the right on to the brow and under the shell fire. As the French troops came up the gentle acclivity, the guns of the forts continued to play without interruption. So narrow was the margin, that I question much whether a shell or two did not find its billet in the French ranks. I stood by the 108th Regiment as it quitted the position behind Le Désert where it had found some shelter. A couple of young lieutenants gaily shook hands with a Hussar aide-de-camp, who had just ridden up with an order, as they passed him to go out into the battle. On went the regiments in their dense columns of companies, the shells now crashing into the ranks, now exploding in the intervals. Line was formed, the rear files pelting up at the double, and in a twinkling less than fifty yards separated the combatant lines. Then came a volley, then a venom-

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ous file-firing, and the French broke and gave ground. It was only to back a little in the dip of the ground to let the guns of the fort go to work again. The Saxons had perforce to find what cover they might. When the 108th regiment came back—it had not been gone twenty minutes—thirty-six officers out of forty-five had gone down. Neither of the blithe lieutenants were to the fore. And now came a lull in the musketry fire, just as a few minutes before there had been a lull in the cannon fire. The Saxons failed to get their artillery into action with advantage. It was afterwards explained to me that the ground was unfavourable for its operations, but this, it must have been obvious from the description I have given of it, was incorrect. Although, exposed as the field-batteries would have been to a tremendous fire from the forts, it was in the nature of things that they should have suffered greatly; still, the time was one when loss was not to be considered, for the crisis was imminent. The artillery might have at least done something before being silenced, and God knows something was wanted to ease for the infantry the fierce brunt of the fray. While this was going on to the right of Villiers, the battle raged with continuous fury in front of the park of the château, but my position precluded me from seeing anything of it but the merest fringe on the right. How hot it was, however, the steady, heavy pattering of the musketry fire, interspersed with louder crashes that told now of whole volleys, now of bursting shells, sufficiently testified. If further testimony be required, let the exacting one go and look at the grave-mounds.

What I have been writing of took place before noon. After a little the artillery fire from the forts slackened considerably, and the French infantry made no demonstration. On the German left, however, about Cham-

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pigny, it was evident that hard fighting was going on. About one the French made another advance, having, as I believed, received considerable reinforcements, and Avron and Nogent resumed the old fierceness of their cannonade. The Saxon infantry confronted them on the challenge, with the old result. But a different policy was this time adopted. It was plain the only escape from the terrible thunderbolts lay in getting to close quarters with the French infantry, unless, indeed, the position was to be abandoned, and that was not to be thought of. So, when the French fell back, the Saxons followed on, as if they wanted to settle the question with the bayonet-point. It was the old motto, "*Vorwärts, immer vorwärts.*" But the *vorwärts* was very slow. What happened for the next hour I could only guess by the constant crackling of the small arms. The forts confined themselves seemingly for the most part to firing into and over Champigny, Villiers, and Noisy. But at length the French were visible slowly and stubbornly falling back across the north side of the neck, the Saxons pushing them hard, the French ever and anon rallying.

On this portion of the slope and level south of Brie there was a prolonged struggle. I understand the Saxons were striving to get at and cut the obnoxious pontoon bridge. But this was an impossibility, when Nogent went to work again with the terrible accuracy of which the short range admitted. The combatants parted about three o'clock, both sides falling back. The fort fire continued some little time longer. What shall I say of the result? Not much did the Saxons gain—was there much to gain? The Würtembergers held, I believe, at the close of the fight, one end of Champigny. According to the information I received at night at head-quarters, Brie at night stood empty and desolate—it might have been wounded

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men were groaning in its cellars. There had been French in it in the morning; later there had been Saxons. But next morning I came to know that there were French in it again after the Saxons quitted it, and they held it till the general retreat across the Marne. The Germans had gained the victory, in that they had not been beaten away from their stand-point. The French had lost the day, because Trochu did not sup in Lagny. And that is all that can be said on the matter.

Here let me again observe that had it been possible to hold and utilise the occupation of Brie, the French advance would have been impossible. Its flanking fire would have prohibited the breasting of the slope toward Villiers. The French must have had mitrailleuses located somewhere in the plain. I distinctly heard the horrible whirr, which always set my teeth on edge.

At night I dined with the head-quarter staff of the 12th Army Corps, in the head-quarters in Champs. I never sat down to a more sombre dinner-table. Men spoke to each other in hushed, some in tremulous voices; some ate nothing, for they had already supped full of sorrow. The gloomy party broke into groups after dinner, and what little talk there was was inexpressibly sad. There were chairs empty at dinner-time that had been occupied at the hurried breakfast. Not a man in the room but had lost some dear friends; many had lost relatives, for there is much kinship in the little country whence came those fighting-men. There were those in the room who had brothers lying stark in the moonlight by the park wall of Villiers. It chilled one's blood to hear the scraps of question and answer. "What about ——?" "Todt." "And ——?" "Schwer verwundet." And there were anxious thoughts about the morrow among the chiefs. There was no talk about failure, but it was ob-

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vious that the leaders comprehended how hard it had gone with the linesmen in heading back the French. Snow fell steadily all night. The frost came and nipped the ground like a vice. It seemed, as I left the Prince's château, that the dismal wintry wind brought on its wings moans and groans from the miserable beings—rent with double torture, the anguish of their wounds and the bitter pinching of the fell cold—who lay there on the Schlachtfeld up in our front. Lay there that night quite half the wounded,—no longer, many of them, alive when the morning sun broke through the frost fog; lay there some for yet another night, and still lived when the Krankenträger found them.

On the forenoon of the fourth day there were found eight poor wretches—four in the open field, four in a house—who had survived the inclemency of two nights of as hard frost as any we had during the hardest winter on record for years. Some, if not all of them, lived at least two days after they were found. On the morning of the 6th I asked the question of a Würtemberg doctor if his frost-bitten patients still lived, and he replied, with a professional shrug of the shoulders, "Oh, yes, they are a little alive." Two days after the battle two French officers were found skulking in a cellar unhurt, but half frozen. No doubt it was their intention to escape away into the landward parts of France. On being asked why they did not fall back with the rest, their assertion was that they were disgusted with the Army of Paris, it was in such a state of disorder. They themselves—self-constituted critics—were the best proofs of such a state of things. I should have so liked to have seen the sneaks handed over to Ducrot. There were corpses lying unburied for days after; for wounded had to be removed, and dead had to be buried, under a steady relentless fire

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from the forts. Under such circumstances the burial-parties were not particular how deep they dug the graves. Three months after, riding towards Paris across the fields from the Imperial review of the Maas army, on the slope before Villiers my horse suddenly shied with a great frightened bound. Looking down, I saw a pair of human legs sticking up out of the ground. Close by a ghastly face showed up piecemeal through a broken sprinkling of fat earth. The corpses of three French soldiers lay there, side by side, buried so shallowly that the rain had washed away the coating of earth that had covered them.

Complaints were rife as to the treacherous conduct of French soldiers, and particularly of officers, in the field. In the sortie at Epinay, two days previously, Count Keller and another officer had been shot down by a body of Frenchmen behind a barricade which they approached in consequence of the hoisting of a white flag. On the 2nd more than one incident of a similar nature was spoken of. Unless strongly confirmed, I was loth to give credence to stories of the kind; but the treachery towards Count Keller was too well authenticated to be questioned. I heard it alleged that Colonel Hausen, of the 13th Saxon Jäger Bataillon, was fired on in this fashion. But this, at least, may be contradicted. The colonel fancied that a posse of Frenchmen who had halted, and were gesticulating after the French manner, had surrendered. He rode forward to within a few paces of them, and demanded to know if this was the case. Somebody in their ranks audaciously responded that, on the contrary, they thought it was the Germans that had surrendered. Whereupon the colonel wheeled his horse and rode back. As he went several bullets were fired at him, one of which killed his horse, but he escaped.

The latest figures gave the Würtemberger loss at 40

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officers and 1,500 rank and file killed, wounded, and missing, and the Saxon loss at 76 officers and 2,000 rank and file killed, wounded, and missing. "Missing" in such a case means "taken prisoner." Now it is certain that in the open the French took no prisoners, and I never could exact the confession that any were taken in the villages. A little mystery enveloped the doings there which it was not easy to penetrate, and one had to resort to collateral and circumstantial evidence, if he could find it. Prisoner-statistics are always a good test. If you choose to say that you evacuated a village because you found it untenable, the euphemism may be allowed to you; but if I learn that you had to leave behind you certain wounded men, which fell into the enemy's hands—and, it may be, sound men, who had to lay down their arms per force of circumstances—I am at liberty to put my own construction on your little periphrase. The loss in officers was unprecedented, even in a war in which the German officers poured out their blood like water, and fell in numbers far exceeding the usual proportion. I have already mentioned that the 108th (the Schützen) Regiment lost 36 officers out of 45. One battalion was taken out of action by a young lieutenant, a Hammerstein. The name must be familiar to everyone who has read the history of the King's German Legion, that splendid body of soldiers who did Britain service so staunch in the Peninsula and at Waterloo, and of whom Wellington had so high an opinion. He was the only officer left in the battalion that could stand, and he was wounded in two places.

Among the many officers whom the Würtembergers lost on the 2nd was one lieutenant, whose loss ought to have an interest for Englishmen, seeing that he, too, was an Englishman. His name was Knight. He had joined

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the Würtemberger Army in 1857, and when the war broke out was on a visit in England. He hastened back to rejoin his regiment, and served throughout the campaign scathless until this fight. It was in the storm of the barricade at Champigny that our gallant countryman went down, shot dead by a chassepot bullet. His comrades buried him by himself in Pontault, a village in the left rear of Champigny. It will be long ere an epitaph is necessary to prevent his memory from being forgotten at all events in the Würtemberg Army. The men of his regiment—the 2nd Jäger Battalion, in which he was a premier lieutenant—spoke of him with tears in their eyes, and the officers told of him how he was beloved by all who knew him.

The fights of the 30th November and 2nd December call for but little comment; they furnish their own explanation. The French Army of Paris was never so near success as on the evening of the latter day, unless it were on the evening of the former. Had the Army of the Loire actually been in anything like proximity to the German rear, the environment must have inevitably been disrupted. Some pages back I quoted the expression of an opinion on the part of a staff officer that when the great effort came, it would be not simply a sortie, but an attempt to break out with a force sufficient to constitute a field army capable of co-operating with the Army of the Loire. The verification of his anticipation was found in the fact that in the knapsacks of the captive, wounded, and dead French soldiers were found full provisions for six days—bread, meat, rice, coffee, &c. The meat looked like horse, it is true, but there it was. The kit in the knapsacks almost exclusively consisted of provisions. The Saxons and Würtembergers, as it was, and with an enemy only in their front, were strained, perhaps more hardly

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than they cared to own, before they succeeded in balking the effort of the 30th, and, had the French renewed the fighting next day, the tension would have been still more strained. But they were in no condition, seemingly, for such an undertaking, and the Germans were not idle in the interval fortunately allowed them. Spite of the energetic exertions to repair damages, the links of the iron chain were again sorely tried on the 2nd, and the flaws that showed in places gave ominous warnings that made men tremble for the continuity. But the links held till the strain relaxed at night, and then the cry was, "All hands to make good defects." The French had enough of it; their general had not Grant's rugged doggedness to "fight it out in this line." If Trochu, with his vast nominal army roll, could have swept to one side the troops out of whom two days' hard and unsuccessful fighting had taken the backbone, and could have substituted an equal force of good and fresh soldiers, well commanded, and full of resolution, he would be a rash man who would dare to define what might have been the result. But what we now know entitles us to believe that he had nothing in hand on which he could rely, and that, in the despondent consciousness of the difficulties of the situation, he acted with a certain methodical discretion. Whether in the circumstances he might not have done better to be reckless is a question on which it is useless to speculate. As for the battle of the 2nd—and the same, no doubt, applies to that of the 30th—it was characterised by straightforward, slogging, hard hitting on both sides, and an utter absence of strategy. If the Germans had elected to meet the French further back, they would have escaped the terrific hailstorm of shells from the forts that poured upon them with such steady fury, that the whole face of the battle-scene is studded over with craters as close as

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the pock-pits stud the face of a man who has had the small-pox. To one pressing this argument, their reply is that, had they taken up ground to hold further back, they would have given the French greater elbow-room in which to deploy their vast masses, while, with inferior numbers, their own front would have been extended to attenuation. It may be in its turn suggested, as a reply to this argument, that if on first selecting their positions, at the commencement of the siege, they had chosen some such defensive line as I have indicated further to the rear, they would have had leisure to strengthen it artificially,—that entrenchments, stockades, and batteries might have done service in lieu of the bare breasts of gallant men.

CHAPTER II.

From the great Sortie to the New Year.

ALL the livelong night between the 2nd and the 3rd of December, the movements of troops were going on. Artillery was being posted in cunning places. Strengthening drafts of soldiers, what the 23rd division dared to spare, were tramping over the upper Kriegs-brücke from the northern side of the Marne. The lower bridge at Gournay, that by which I had crossed in the morning, had been shot to splinters by Avron. Punctually at daybreak on the morning of the 3rd, did Nogent tender us his morning greeting, and soon after the cannonade became general. About seven I met one of Prince George's staff on the steps of the château. "Great God!" was his troubled greeting, "how is all this to end? Is it to be another hellish day, like yesterday? I shudder at the prospect." There seemed every likelihood of the fulfilment of his foreboding. The forts increased the fury of their fire. The roads and fields before Champs were

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covered with the dense masses of the reserves—reserves formed of troops that had been in action the day before. So sharp was the crisis thought, that a half-battalion of Bavarian Landwehr-men who had reached Lagny the day before, on their road to the south, were diverted through Torcy on toward Champs to help in case they should be wanted. The head-quarter column was on the road in the rear, ready for the contingency of the front being driven somewhat back; its heaviest fourgons had retired to Torcy; head-quarters themselves had no local habitation by name, but shifted about the field when Prince George moved backwards and forwards. Even the marketenders in Champs were packed up, and had fallen to the rear.

Soon after seven, the French showed in dense masses on the peninsula of the Marne, and took up their formation across its neck. Through the frosty fog their appearance was very imposing. A column quitted the main body and headed direct for Villiers, under cover of a heavy fire from the forts. Noisy and Villiers had been occupied by the Würtembergers during the previous evening. The occupants of Villiers showed a bold front, and the French did not seem inspired with the spirit that had actuated them the day before. By eight o'clock the column which had threatened an attack had fallen back among the mass, which to all appearance remained in position during the day. The forts continued their fire for some hours. The Würtembergers, in such exposed positions, naturally sustained some loss, probably a few dozens of wounded men. The head-quarters of the 12th Corps resettled itself in the château of Champs in the course of the day, and remained there till the 6th. On the morning of the return to the old location in Le Vert Galant, Avron got one gun or more guns into position

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of so great a range that several shells fell in the garden of the château, and two upon its roof. On the afternoon of the 3rd the Crown Prince arrived from Margency, and immediately visited the battle-field along with his brother and the 12th Army Corps staff (the Crown Prince had with him but Count Vitzthum, his personal aide-de-camp), having several narrow escapes of shells from Fort Nogent. The Crown Prince, after a lengthened consultation with his brother, returned to Margency for the night, while Prince George remained in Champs; for the cloud had by no means drifted off the sky. So sullenly, indeed, although silently, did it still lower, that, as Count Vitzthum kindly whispered to me as he got into the carriage with the Crown Prince, it had been arranged that the head-quarters of the latter should come round on the morrow to the east, and take up a temporary location in Prince George's château in Le Vert Galant, to be at hand in case of need, till the storm should have blown off the peninsula of the Marne.

On learning that there were some symptoms of an attack in the neighbourhood of the advanced post of Ville Evrart, on the north of the Marne, on the left of that awkward part of the ring of environment of which Gagny, on the fringe of the Forest of Bondy, is the right, I rode over to Chelles after the Crown Prince had quitted Champs, and then walked out to Ville Evrart, horse-exercise being prohibited in that particular locality. There was no policeman to enforce the prohibition, but, nevertheless, I fancy it was very seldom infringed, Mont Avron having a playful way of potting at horsemen, or even at a single horseman, with little toys that had a tendency to break the skin. It was this *chaussée* along which I had been trotting the previous morning, on my road, as I fancied, to a bridge over the Marne, and it

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struck me that I must have come very near affording a practical illustration of the danger attending equitation in this exposed direction. Through the hazy drizzle, half snow half rain, there were visible in the fields to the north of Neuilly, and under the lee of Avron, moving bodies that looked as if they had military formation. They were soldiers covering potato-diggers, and Captain Hammerstein's Saxons were keeping up upon them a lively but intermittent fusillade. Whether the potato-diggers had filled their baskets or not, the whole body very soon vanished backward in the mist, there being a ghostliness about the whole incident that might remind one of a Fenian drill in the night. Captain Hammerstein, a cousin of the youngster of the same name I have already mentioned, was quartered with a company of his regiment (the 103rd) in a detached château, La Maison Blanche, to the north of Ville Evrart. This position here was such that every shot on its way from Avron to Noisy went high over his head, and he assured me that the fire of the latter had been more sustained that morning than even on the previous day. There had been hardly even a momentary respite, and often three of the great cannon crashed out their reports simultaneously. How the Würtembergers in Noisy suffered so little from such a fire is only to be explained by the thickness of the walls in the village.

Forty years ago there could have been few finer residences round Paris than La Maison Blanche. The railway came and infringed on its amenities, but not to any great extent, the noble old trees acting as a screen to the track. Later came the Germans, and they bedevilled the amenities far worse than the railway. War time is a bad season for trim grass-plots, painted staircases, and luxurious carpets. Then last of all came shells from Mont

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Avron, over the way, and played old gooseberry with the amenities that still kept up a self-assertion in the face of the hostile occupation. The hour is midnight. A huge wood fire is blazing in the noble drawing-room of the mansion. In a comfortable armchair on one side of this fire sits a middle-aged Hauptmann, opposite him an individual in civilian attire. The two are drinking grog, and chatting as they drink. They are old friends. They knew each other a dozen years ago in Lüneburg, that dullest of all dull Hanoverian cities, when as yet King George, the pious, the blind, and the obstinate, reigned in Hanover, and annexation was only dimly apprehended by far-sighted people, who—such is the lot of the sapient —were put down as theorists and alarmists. The middle-aged Hauptmann had fought in six-and-sixty in the army of his monarch, and when the evil day came he, with some eighty comrades, had transferred his services to Saxony, in preference to remaining in an army which thenceforth was to be merely a Prussian army corps. The talk is of the old days in Lüneburg, of pleasant rides by the banks of the Ilmenau, of rowing excursions up to Rothensleuser, of naughty scampers to Hamburg, of those pretty English girls that stole the hearts of a couple of regiments of infantry, of the old Waterloo major that lived by the waterside, of certain sensational steeplechases and memorable mess dinners. Unto these two there enters Under-officer Schultz. Schultz is a Saxon, but utterly unlike the bulk of his countrymen. Schultz would make an excellent study for an artist anxious to limn a Cameronian or one of Cromwell's Ironsides. His name might be Praise-the-Lord-Barebones. Tall, gaunt, thin-flanked, and square-shouldered, with high cheek-bones, and a lofty, narrow forehead, Under-officer Schultz enters, and bringing his heels together with an audible clank,

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stands bolt upright and motionless. "Well, Schultz?" asks the Hauptmann. "Herr Hauptmann, the patrol is ready," replies Schultz, with solemn curtness. Herr Hauptmann bolts the heel-tap of his grog, rises, tightens his sword-belt, feels for his little friend the six-chambered revolver, puts on his cloak and helmet, pulls up his long boots, and is ready. The civilian's preparations are simpler, since he has no arms to see to. Out into the night air. "Der Teufel! what a beastly night." It had been hard frost all day, and now it rains a drizzly rain. The wet has mingled with the frost, and the ground is at once slippery and sticky. It will be dirty and heavy walking to-night, that is clear. There is a moon, but the sky seems as muddy as the earth, and her rays serve only to impart a dirty white tinge to the fine drizzling rain. The patrol—three sturdy Saxon soldiers—are standing motionless in the gloom, the red cigar tips showing dimly through the rime. "March!" says the Hauptmann. Schultz takes his place in front of the patrol, and behind the Hauptmann and his companion, and away goes the little party, slipping and stumbling down the tree-shadowed avenue. They traverse about half an English mile of flat country, crossed by numerous walls and fences, enclosing fields and the grounds surrounding châteaux. The way is winding and the road horrible. There is no life in this tract, till, lately, inhabited by wealthy Parisians. Somewhere about is a new château, not quite finished, belonging to the great French surgeon Nelaton. But the masons and carpenters have stopped their work, and are now in the Garde Mobile, and the doctor is certainly not at home. Presently the ground begins to rise. The party are climbing the slope of a hill. That hill is Mont Avron. There is no road, only a rough track through the copsewood,

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interspersed with vineyards. At every second step somebody is on his hands and knees; now stumbling over a stump, now losing his foothold in the mud with the frost-hardened substratum. The vineyard track winds and wriggles, but it is always upward, and that steeply too in places, so that the breathing comes harder and shorter. Suddenly there comes a smothered "Halt!" from vigilant Under-officer Schultz, that curious pitch of the voice in full development that is the characteristic of Saxon-German, and that reminds one so much of the "twang" of the fisher-folk in the villages on the Moray Firth. Under-officer Schultz has not called "Halt!" for nothing; his quick ear has detected coming footsteps. "Dodge behind the thick brushwood there," is the sharp-whispered order of Herr Hauptmann. The party is off the track in a twinkling, hiding like a Fenimore Cooper's Indian, the civilian, in particular, squatting like a rabbit. The movement was not an instant too soon. The sound of the footsteps and voices comes nearer and nearer. There is a medley of jabber, everybody speaking together in shrill French. "A patrol of Francs-tireurs," whispers the Hauptmann. A nice patrol party truly, doing their work with that silent vigilance and caution which the duty essentially calls for. Pop! a gun goes off. Have the jabberers spotted the lurkers in the wood? If so, the pregnant thought occurs to one of them how a mercenary life assurance office had "hung up" his policy till he should return home in safety. Tut! any apprehension was ludicrous. One of the Francs-tireurs had fired off his piece in mere lightness of heart. Probably he shot into the air. Stern Under-officer Schultz gives a snort of contempt, and mutters between his teeth, "*dummer Kerl.*"

The Franc-tireur patrol has passed, and the squatters

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get up from their muddy position, and stumble onward and upward. They are near the top of the hill now. A light is visible through the undergrowth of scrub, and there is a halt. The light is the watch fire of a French picket. There is a sentry posted, who has his back to the forest and his face to the fire, such a position affording him full opportunities for the exercise of vigilance. What is he doing now? Under-officer Schultz gives another snort of contempt as the sentry props his piece against a tree, walks up to the fire, and has a drink, taking a good long warm before he comes back. All the picket are drinking. Some seem tolerably on toward drunkenness, judging by the clatter of loud voices. Above, on the flat summit of the hill, is the battery. It is evident that there is another watchfire inside it. The earthwork, whispers the Hauptmann, looks three ways, and has six guns mounted on each face. It is the latest construction of the besieged. It has only been in operation for about ten days, and it is an abominably mischievous affair. There are no movements or signs of movements in the vicinity. This ascertained, the patrol takes its weary way back to the château. Getting down the hill is worse than it was getting up. How welcome is the wood fire in the drawing-room. Herr Hauptmann and the civilian look at each other, and simultaneously burst into a fit of laughter. They are plastered with mud from head to foot. Under-officer Schultz, who is muddier than either—for his nose seems to have been rooting in red clay—stands by as solemn as a mute at a funeral. He gets an order, goes right about face as by machinery, and disappears. Grog and cigars in the arm-chairs.

On the morning of the 4th, on my way from La Maison Blanche to Le Vert Galant, I breakfasted in Chelles

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with Major von Schönberg and the Staff of the 103rd Regiment. While breakfast was proceeding it was suddenly announced that the whole 23rd Division, of which the 103rd formed a part, was to cross the Marne. No destination was announced. They might go to Noisy, under the terrible fire; they might relieve the Würtembergers in the hardly less dangerous Villiers; or it might be their lot to occupy the splendid château of the wealthy soapboiler in Champs. Nobody knew, but the movement looked like fighting. Before coffee was served, however, there arrived a couple of lieutenants of the 108th Regiment, come to take up quarters for the regiment, and bringing the announcement that the whole of the 24th Division was under orders to take the positions of the 23rd on the North side of the Marne. The anticipations of an immediate renewal of the combat subsided on this intelligence—all that was in progress was merely an outer change of quarters, and the relief of a division that had suffered very much on the 2nd. But to return to the two sprightly young lieutenants of the 108th, who came there to choose quarters for their brother officers. The youngest of them, a boy of about 19, had rare luck on the 2nd. By the doctrine of chances he should have been now on the look-out for a grave, not for quarters. In the short skirts of his tunic were four bullet holes, his left shoulder strap was severed and hung in fringes from another bullet, and he had no knee on the left leg of his overalls, the piece had been torn clean out by the fragment of a shell. The young rascal walked lame from the latter casualty, but otherwise he was as sound as a bell, and to see him tackle a yard of "wurst" was a caution. While our young friends were talking with Major von Schönberg about quarters, there dropped in the representative of another regiment on the same

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errand. I was an auditor of the interview. It was too good not to be narrated. Representative of incoming regiment: "You have here a beautiful place, Herr Major, with a fine *Speise-saal* and a grand piano. This will suit well our Herr Oberst." Herr Major Schönberg: "Oh, yes, and many grenades come into the garden. That will furnish a pleasant accompaniment to the piano." As if to confirm the Major's words, whizz—bang came a shell from Mont Avron, and lit right in front of the window, sending the pellets of half-frozen mud up against the glass. The Major grinned a dry grin. His sympathy had been enlisted as regards quarters in favour of the young lieutenants. The formal staff officer hesitated. Whizz, bang, another shell—this time on the roof. He looked still more undecided. Then up came the doctor of the 103rd, and recounted how the shells had interfered with him the day before. This was enough for our friend. He left the field to the young lieutenants, and went in search of quarters less exposed.

As I jogged out of Chelles, on the way to Montfermeil, I met the whole of the 1st Grenadier Guard Regiment. This was the *avant courier* of a whole brigade of the Guards, including its artillery, pressing on to occupy Chelles and the vicinity. The movement, and those movements along the whole line of which this was but a detail, did not augur anything more than a design to strengthen the position across the dangerous peninsula in such a manner as to negative whatever advantage the French might ostensibly derive from their occupation of Brie, Champigny, and the peninsula in the rear of these villages, which was still in their possession. As I rode out of Chelles, the shells—how similar are the two names —came pounding into it vigorously. The French must have seen the movement of the troops, and thought to

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inconvenience it with their long-range artillery. A German battery on a bluff between Chelles and Montfermeil might have attempted a reply had the guns in it been siege pieces instead of field guns, but as it was, Mont Avron was allowed to have it all its own way. The only casualty, so far as I saw, which the fire produced was to startle a pair of fine grey horses which, with a carriage behind them, were coming down the steep slope out of Montfermeil. Off they tore at a furious gallop, kicking the splinter bar to bits, and utterly ignoring the frantic zeal with which the driver tugged at the reins. They dashed through a company of the Guards, routing with ignominy a section which had taken up the road, bayonets levelled, with intent to stop them. The driver jumped out here, and lit safely on the top of a soldier. The horses galloped on, strewing the road with portmanteaus, cigar-boxes, a mattress, and other contents of the carriage, which was rapidly going to pieces. At length, still pursuing the same headlong pace, they vanished round a corner, and their ultimate fate I know not.

On my arrival in Le Vert Galant I found that the Crown Prince's head-quarters had already arrived, and had occasioned a squeeze-royal in the little place. Quarters, such as they were, were ultimately found for everybody without recourse being had to bivouac. On the 5th the Crown Prince paid a second visit to his brother in Champs, and an informal council of war was held, the faces at which must have worn a much more cheerful expression than those which had surrounded Prince George's table on the night of the 2nd inst. There was reason for the good spirits. The French had lost heart, or had determined to concentrate their efforts in some other direction. On the morning of the 5th it was found that they had not only evacuated Brie and Champigny,

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but were engaged in abandoning the horseshoe also, and retiring beyond the Marne. This operation was performed under a very heavy fire from Mont Avron and Fort Nogent, which impeded the Würtembergers not a little in their occupation of the vacated villages. Several were killed and wounded in the course of the morning. There had been, indeed, a brisk little skirmish just in the neck of the peninsula. The Würtembergers, feeling their way ever onward to take up a forepost line aligning on Brie and Champigny, pushed on into a wood called Le Plaine. This same wood had been part of the French forepost line some twelve hours before, and it seemed that they resented the readiness with which on their abandonment of it the Würtembergers came to occupy it. The wood was an important post in the very throat of the peninsula, and on the south of the line of railway just where it bends to cross the river. The French thought it worth while to send a battalion to dispute its possession with the Würtembergers, and the little force was backed up by a fire from the big guns, but the Würtembergers pressing on steadily succeeded in occupying the wood and establishing their foreposts without exposing themselves much to the artillery fire, and without coming to close quarters with the French, who fell back on finding the wood occupied. The French did not wholly quit the peninsula. Although they destroyed their other bridges, they continued to retain at least one at Joinville, and held the few houses on the trans-Marne side of the stone bridge which spans the river opposite that village, while their outposts were stationed in the farm buildings of Poulangés. Here they were close under the lee of La Faisanderie and La Gravelle, on the ramparts of which were guns of long range and large calibre. Under the circumstances it was judged wise to leave them there in

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peace. He who visits the spot now may see still traces of the French bivouacs from the 30th November to the 5th December, and he will see another solemn relic of this unfortunate expedition in a clay field on the river side of the road. The clay is dug out and piled up in four or five long parallel ridges, like huge flat-topped potato pits. They are of unequal lengths, but two at least are over fifty yards in length. At either end of each are rude crosses, and on one shapelier yet plain wooden cross is painted the legend that here lie 800 corpses buried by the various ambulances.

On the 6th of December the Crown Prince returned to Margency, and Prince George quitted Champs and went back to his old quarters in Le Vert Galant. The whole of the officers belonging to the Crown Prince's staff did not, however, accompany him on his return to Margency. The officers composing the engineer and artillery staffs of the Maas army, went to Champs instead, and a hint which I received led me to think more might be learnt as to the turn future operations were likely to take by accompanying those gentlemen than by going back to Margency. Before leaving Le Vert Galant, in the pleasant company of Lieutenant Hofmann, I was witness there of a scene full of pathos. The 107th Regiment had marched in on the previous night and taken up quarters. In the morning came on, in a large waggon, what the Feld-post had for the regiment. The waggon drew up at the battalion orderly room, and the bugle sounded the rally. It was a curious medley that streamed out as the tail-board of the waggon was let down. The German Feld-post is an elastic institution, and I think if you had chosen to send a soldier-friend out a box mangle, or a live tiger in its cage, there would have been no objections on the score of bulk. There streamed down

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cigar-boxes, wrapped in canvas, long shapeless rolls that were eloquent of "wurst," flabby packets that one might swear contained underclothing, and little boxes that rolled as they fell, and evidently contained thalers. The pile was made against the wall, the sergeant cleared a space and commenced on the pile letter by letter, packet by packet.

I made a note of the responses to the first six names, and simply transcribe it:—"Schumann?" "Todt" (dead). "Caspar?" "Verwundet." "Schultz?" "Weg." "Stolberg?" "Todt." "Schrader?" "In Paris." "Bergmann?" "In Lazareth." Thus proceeded the dreary roll call. It was that of the 2nd battalion, which has suffered most severely. Before the sergeant had done there was quite a heap of packets which their owners would never claim. The number of "Wegs" was surprising. "Weg" is a wide word. It may mean anything; prisoner, missing, unburied, deserted (but I never heard of a German soldier deserting). The sum of it is —not here, and Lord knows where he is. "In Paris," was not an uncommon response, but always with a little ironical chuckle.

Whatever might have been the case with French people in other quarters of France, there was no want of a certain kind of patriotism in those about this quarter. The villagers on the wayside assailed the Würtembergers on their way back to quarters on the 2nd inst., with cries of "Deutsch nix courage," a piece of "pie" sufficiently intelligible. On our road to Champs we met a strange gang, closely guarded by Saxon soldiers. These were male peasants and female peasants, with year-old children astraddle on their backs. It was clearly a case of going wholesale into captivity. I had never seen anything of the kind before, and I could not understand it. The

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explanation was curt, but sufficiently easy to understand. The villagers—at least several of them—had been detected on the 2nd ult., signalling to their countrymen from the church tower and the top of the windmills. According to the regulations made and provided in the circumstances, the men should have been shot and the villages burnt. It was, it appeared, a merciful dispensation to substitute the temporary captivity of the whole population for the more rigorous measures. I must not be taken as expressing any opinion on a matter, the explanation of which I only received casually, and not upon authority. So far as I could make out, the whole gang would be set at liberty by-and-by, after they had got a good fright; indeed, the women seemed themselves to have discerned as much, for they did not look as if they believed that they were going to the slaughter, or even to captivity in Deutschland.

At Champs we shared the soap-boiler's château with the officers of a Würtemberger infantry regiment, and of a squadron of cavalry. It is heartily to be wished that some one had been present with the Würtembergers on the 30th of November and the 2nd of December who would have done justice to the conduct which it is unquestionable that they displayed. On the former day occurred the only cavalry charge on the part of the Germans which was made, so far as I am aware, during the siege of Paris. It was only a squadron that charged —a portion of the 3rd Würtemberg Dragoons, under the command of Graf von Kronsfeld. But everyone spoke of the gallant ardour which the handful of horsemen displayed, and of the service rendered by the charge in clearing the front, to enable the infantry to operate. From the officer named I had a story which illustrates a very genial trait in the character of the Crown Prince of

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Prussia. In the 3rd Würtemberg Dragoons was a certain Jacob ——, who had a father. The father had not heard from his son Jacob for an unconscionably long time, so the old man, in his rustic simplicity, sat down and wrote a letter to the Crown Prince, asking for information about Jacob. The old man knew he had been at Wörth, and also in the battle of Sédan, but nothing more. Wherefore he humbly prayed that his Royal Highness would make inquiry, and let him know at his earliest convenience whether Jacob was all right, and if not, what had befallen him. The Crown Prince, "of his own knowledge," as witnesses say, knew nothing about Jacob, but instead of putting the letter in the waste basket, he sent it round to the officer commanding the 3rd Würtembergers, with a request that the old man's mind should be set at ease. It is pleasant to be able to add that Jacob was not killed or wounded, but only a bad correspondent. How many are like Jacob!

The engineer and artillery staffs of the Maas Army went desperately hard to work as soon as they got to Champs—so unremittingly, that I felt myself *de trop*, and was wont to clear out on to the foreposts whenever I saw the maps and draughting paper produced. There were six of us in one room, and there were no other rooms empty. I felt that I ought not to listen while orders were being dictated about batteries, barricades, &c., not, I believe, that my gallant friends at all distrusted my discretion, but because it was obvious if anything were prematurely to leak out through another medium, both they and I might be compromised by mistake. But, although it was not a matter to be written about at the time, one behind the scenes could not refrain from being cognisant of the fact that the business which kept the artillery and engineer staff of the Maas Army in Champs

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was not wholly connected with the strengthening of the cordon across the horse-shoe. That it was true was their first work, but when the talk came to be of the ranges of siege guns, of the establishment of a park at Brou, a few kilomètres behind Chelles, of the construction of extra strong bridges capable of bearing heavy artillery, of the requisitioning of trains of cart transport for ammunition cases, of the wholesale manufacture of fascines and gabions, of the construction under cover of night of massive emplacements for great guns, of the time when Colonel Bartsch and his fortress artillerists should arrive, it was obvious that something else was in the wind. Three days after the fight of Villiers, I knew that the German tactics on the east side had been changed, and that Mont Avron was to be bombarded.

Visiting, on the 8th, the head-quarters of General Obernitz in Malnoue, I found there copies of the Paris papers containing General Trochu's reply to von Moltke's communication recounting the German victory at Orleans on the 4th, and offering a safe conduct to any officer whom the former might send out to verify the disastrous position. There was the ring of true metal in the note which the Paris Government appended to the Governor's letter. "This news," they said, "which reaches us through the enemy, supposing it to be accurate, does not deprive us of our right to rely on the great movement of France rushing to our relief. It changes nothing either in our resolutions or our duties. A single word sums them up—to fight! Long live France! Long live the Republic!" And so while one side set its teeth hard and resigned itself with gallant devotion to "ruin, disease, and death," the other in its masterful methodical way, went leisurely but thoroughly about its preparations for the bombardment. The same afternoon two French de-

serters were brought into the Würtemberg divisional head-quarters in Malnoue. They had come from Choisy-le-Roi, had dodged away northward, traversing the space between Fort Nogent and the Marne, and had crossed the river somewhere below Brie. They mentioned the construction on the slope in front of Nogent of a battery mounted with guns of twelve centimètre calibre, and stated that the vicinity was full of infantry. While riding next day, I met a Hamburg merchant driving full pelt to the railway at Lagny in a state of panic. He was full of a story that the siege of Paris was to be raised at once, in consequence of the interception of a balloon from Paris containing a despatch from Trochu, to the effect that he meant to gain Versailles at any cost. The King, according to the panic-stricken Hamburger, was off to Rheims that night with half the army, and the Crown Prince was to be left behind to fight his way out, covering His Majesty's retreat. Poor man! in the recesses of that deep waggon of his lay, it may be, a good deal of ill-gotten gear, and it might have been a troubled conscience which made his apprehensions so causelessly active. When I met this panic-stricken fugitive I was on my way to a large field Lazarette of wounded, which the Würtembergers had at Pontault, a place some distance to the south of Malnoue. Originally there were about 350 wounded brought thither; but, in pursuance of the usual policy, all had been evacuated towards Germany, with the exception of those cases which were too severe to bear removal. Of these there remained about 120, including a considerable number of amputations. It was the critical time with amputation cases—the third or fourth day—when the ligatures are prone to come away and great effusions of blood recur. In addition to the very bad cases, consisting of Würtembergers chiefly, with

a few Frenchmen and men of the 2nd Army Corps, there were in the place about eighty Frenchmen, who had been too severely wounded for the French to remove them from the field, and had been brought in by the Würtemberger ambulances. The Mayor of Noiseau, a neighbouring village, had volunteered to take these poor fellows off the hands of the Würtemberger medical men, giving his personal guarantee for them as prisoners of war. In most of the cases the Mayor's guarantee was quite superfluous. Unless the war had lasted far longer than it did, not many of these could have been very formidable men for many a day after its termination. One word as to the Würtemberger field ambulances, which are admirable vehicles for their purpose. The hinder end contains places for wounded men on stretchers, which are run in from the rear—two on the lower tier, two above. The front part is a kind of double coupé, comfortably padded and seated for six men not so severely wounded as to necessitate a recumbent position. The sides are well screened, while at the same time free ventilation is secured. The body of the waggon is mounted on capital springs, and four good horses, with mounted drivers, ensure rapid conveyance to the Lazarette. The Würtembergers had special wounded trains of their own, which were employed in despatching their men from Lagny to Würtemberg. The American construction of railway carriage is in use in Würtemberg, and it is easy to conceive the facilities for the conveyance of wounded afforded by this build. I learned from the Prince of Saxe-Weimar that one of those trains had been inspected by our army medical representatives at the seat of war, Inspector-General Innes and Dr. Becker. The representatives of another of our institutions, the British National Society, had put in a most opportune appearance both at Pontault and Noisiel,

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another large Lazarette in this neighbourhood. Four fourgons had arrived from Meaux on the 4th December, under the direction of Captain Brackenbury; and Dr. Biberstein, the chief of the medical staff, spoke with enthusiasm of the business-like manner in which the British fourgons were able to fulfil his requisitions, which he said were both large and various. The British Society beat the Berliner Hülfsverein this journey. Active men as the almoners of the latter were, they only put in an appearance at Pontault on the day before my visit.

While the doctor and myself were having a gossip before making a tour of the Lazarette, the Prince of Saxe-Weimar came to visit the wounded Würtembergers. He is married to a daughter of the King of Würtemberg, and had been commissioned by his parents-in-law to this kindly duty. The Prince is a big man: all the Saxe-Weimars run large, and he has a heart certainly big in proportion to his corporal bulk. Sad as were the sights the wards presented, it was a not unpleasant peregrination which I made round them in his company. The Prince went round with a box of cigars under his arm. With each man in turn he had a little conversation, which always ended in the question, "Can you smoke?" The affirmative response was all but universal. One or two poor fellows there were who seemed past caring for the cigar—past the power of speech, indeed. All that they could do was to look grateful for the Prince's kindly words. One bright-eyed young fellow replied so warmly, "Ach, ja, eure Hoheit!" The doctor shook his head, the boy was in the fever, and a cigar might not be the best thing in the world for him. But he pleaded so hard, that the good doctor relented, and let him have the grateful weed. Another chap would have the Prince

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see the piece of shell that had made a hole in him. "In the cupboard" he directed the orderly. The cupboard was searched, but it could not be found, and the doctor would have had the Prince pass on. But he would not, and by-and-by the bit of shell turned up in the wounded man's waistcoat pocket. There were two men who had each lost a leg, with whom the Prince had specially interesting conversations. One was a stalwart, hairy, under-officer. He was one of three brothers, and now all were wounded in this war. And was he married? No; but there was an old woman in some street or other in Stuttgart, and now that all her sons were down it might be bad times with her. The other "amputated" was a mere boy, handsome as a statue. I don't know whether it may have struck others as it did me, that there are a great number of classically beautiful men among the Würtembergers. This lad was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. In both cases the Prince's hand went into his pocket, and came out with a gold piece. "Here, my man, send that to the mother, and let her know it comes from the Queen." In one ward were two amputation cases—one was a Frenchman, the other a Würtemberger. Both had burst out bleeding, and the orderlies were busy around them, pressing femoral arteries, picking up veins, and applying ice. The Frenchman was shrieking and yelling; the German lay silent, the drops of cold sweat on his forehead, and the muscles of his face working, but never a cry came from him. The spectacle illustrated one of the differences between the two nationalities. As he quitted each room, the Prince said a few simple words to the effect that he was commissioned by the King and Queen of Würtemberg to visit the wounded, and to thank them for their exertions on behalf of their country. The words, I fancy,

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and the visit did more good than any physic Dr. Biberstein could exhibit. All the occupants of this Lazarette were wounded men; there had been a few cases of typhus, but they had been sent to the rear. To quote the dry professional remark of Dr. Biberstein, "We have no time for typhus here."

A report was current in the Maas army on the 11th December, of which, however, I could get no confirmation on my return to head-quarters in Margency on that day, that Count Bismarck had transmitted an ultimatum to the authorities in Paris, offering terms for acceptance within a week. These terms were such as Paris might have thought over before rejecting. Her citizens were to be spared requisitions. No troops would be billeted upon them. The thousand and one objects of fine art in the Queen of Cities would be scrupulously respected. The officers of the army would be treated with the fullest consideration. There were other items in the rumoured ultimatum of a decidedly tempting character, which, in the absence of confirmation as to its authenticity, need not be further alluded to.

On the 12th December the defenders of Paris, for the first time since the 30th November, displayed some activity on the northern face of the environment. Perhaps they were anxious to display to the chiefs of the Maas Army their scornful repudiation of the ultimatum which Bismarck was reported to have tendered. Early in the morning Argenteuil the unfortunate was subjected to a brisk cannonading from the batteries about Nanterre and Courbevoie. The damage done was chiefly to stone and lime. I heard of only one casualty among the Germans, and an inhabitant was killed in his bed by the bursting of a shell. There was a lull as the morning advanced, but the firing was resumed about noon, and

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was quite warm for a couple of hours. There was an unwonted amount of musketry fire between the posts on the opposite sides of the river all the way from Epinay down to Bezons. Accompanying a compatriot who had spent the night with me in Margency, I rode through Argenteuil about one o'clock, when one would almost have imagined that quite an engagement was going on close by, so heavy and continuous was the firing. Mont Valérien was speaking at intervals in its gruff tones, not, however, in our direction, but toward Bougival. It was evident as we rode along the bit of road outside Argenteuil, which commands so capital a view of the adjacent French positions on the peninsula, that the enemy were on the alert for something or other. One could see armed groups coming out from Colombes toward the left, and there was a continuous popping from the French posts among the poplar trees on the other side of the Seine. Presently the bugle began to sound, at first faintly and fitfully, but soon with a louder swell, and then the sound of a military band's music was borne towards us on the wintry wind. It was not easy to form a conjecture as to the nature of the French movements. Whatever they were the fire directed against Argenteuil and its vicinity was probably meant to cover them. Perhaps the French were massing troops on the peninsula, on which are the villages of Gennevilliers, Courbevoie, and Nanterre, and at the neck of which stands Mont Valérien, with a view to a sortie somewhere from it as a base after their failure on the other side of Paris. If this was their design, it was indispensable to its fulfilment that they should have established pontoon bridges over the river in the face of the German fire, and without so strong a support from their own fort guns as that under which they debouched over the Marne. There the

crossing of the river was comparatively easy since they had never lost foothold on the further side; but in the direction to which I now refer, the Seine all the way to the Carrières above St. Germain marked the line of demarcation between French and Germans. I heard no more talk of the renewal of the once abandoned project, which had for its object getting over the river at Bezons. No further effort had been made by the French to repair the bridge there, and the boats which appeared designed to supplement the deficiencies in the means of crossing, had been to all appearance rendered useless by the German field artillery. The French fire lulled again for half an hour towards two o'clock; but was rather warmly renewed soon after that hour. It was then chiefly directed toward the base of Mont d'Orgimont, and between that eminence and Argenteuil. Before nightfall it fell away again.

There existed among the Germans a suspicion that Ducrot's proclamation after the battle of Villiers was meant as a ruse, and that he had not abandoned so fully as he protested his design of utilising for sortie purposes the foothold which he yet held on the other side of the Marne, at Joinville. Some colour seemed given to the suspicion by the unquestionable fact that French troops in great force were still lying around and under Fort Nogent, and towards Charenton. It seemed that the French on their side suspected that the Germans were finding the batteries on Mont Avron so inconvenient as to stimulate to efforts for effecting their silence, for the Mont remained garrisoned by a French force, guessed at not under 6,000 bayonets, which was assiduously engaged in the strengthening of their position in the neighbourhood, by enlarging existing defences and erecting others.

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The 12th was the birthday of the King of Saxony, and in the head-quarters of his eldest son the occasion was warmly celebrated. The Crown Prince and his brother at Le Vert Galant sent filial messages to Dresden, and a congratulatory telegram in the name of the Saxon army was also despatched. The reply which the King sent to his eldest son was of a tenor creditable to our cousins of Saxony. The King's birthday is usually celebrated throughout his territory by great festivities, public feasting, and other demonstrations which involve considerable expenditure. The event in 1870, as one learned from the Royal telegram, was not made an occasion for eating and drinking. Those who lived at home did not make merry while their brethren were standing with their face to the foe, while the wounded groaned in the lazarettes, and while the widows and children were weeping for those who had found graves by Villiers and Brie. The money that, under ordinary circumstances, would have been spent in festivity, was diverted to a nobler use, to add to the comforts of the wounded, and to help those who have lost their bread-winners. But the loyal Saxons in Margency managed to get up an illumination which would have been creditable anywhere, but which was positively wonderful in a region so barren of the materials for such a purpose that if you wanted a candle you had sometimes difficulty in getting one for money! As I walked down to the Feldpost at night, I observed the château on the left, inhabited by our pay-master, brilliantly lit up, and not only did stars and letters of fire bedeck the front of his residence, but particoloured Chinese lanterns hung from every tree in the garden. It was the same in the grounds of the château in which the Feldpost is located. I walked to the door up an alley of illumination. On the night air floated the sounds

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of vociferous "Hochs," which were calculated to suggest the idea that the King's health was being very warmly drunk in more than one Saxon gathering in this French village.

Perhaps the Parisians meant their activity of the 12th, on the northern side, as a complimentary salute to the King of Saxony. This, at least, is certain, that on the 13th, his birthday over, they were profoundly quiet again. It was not believed, however, that this quietude was anything more than a lull, and it seemed to be accepted as a matter of course about this time what we were to look for more fighting, and that the end was not yet at hand. I think it may be taken as a fact that the Germans had been quite out in their reckoning as to the food resources of Paris. According to the calculations and information on which they had based their inactive policy, Paris should by this time have begun to know the meaning of famine, and it was inexpressibly galling to them to find that she was not yet so far gone as to be wholly on salt meat rations. The miscalculation caused chagrin on several grounds. But for it, who can doubt that before this time there would have been a duel between the big guns of North Germany and those of the Paris forts? In that the error of reckoning as to the food resources of Paris had postponed this duel until now there was cause for self-reproach; but there was yet deeper cause for this in the fact that, so implicit had been the leaning on the broken reed of the miscalculation, that the indispensable preliminaries to a bombardment had been neglected. Thus, if it be assumed that now the eyes of the besiegers had been opened, and that they had seen it necessary to resort to this expedient, it was yet plain that they must perforce wait yet awhile; and it was irritating to reflect that the months which had

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elapsed had been in a great measure so much lost time. Now the work had to be gone about in earnest at the worst possible season of the year for such operations, when the roads were terribly heavy after the breaking of a hard frost and the thaw of a considerable fall of snow.

The eagerness with which the troops craved for what they considered the beginning of the end, in the shape of the bombardment, must have been known in head-quarters at Versailles, and must have been taken as an element which could not well have been set aside. But, then, the troops, full of the belief that the bombardment had been now definitely resolved upon, used their discernment to wonder how it happened that so much time had to elapse before it were possible to act on the resolution, and the deduction could not fail to be unfavourable to the German prestige for forethought and a condition of preparedness for alternative events. Still it was safe to reckon that the thunder of the big guns, and the stir of a bombardment would do much to efface such an impression; and all that could now be done was to make up as fast as possible for lost time. There is no doubt that activity had become by this time the order of the day. To one quarter only, the south, had before the second week in the month, all the siege train been directed, and hence the delay elsewhere. Doubtless were the bombardment only to have been on this hand, it might have commenced earlier than it did; but then what of the east side, the side nearest the feeding railway line, and yet a side left utterly barren of siege artillery till the hour that the crisis in font of Villiers forced on the determination to resort to active measures in the shape of a bombardment?

Had guns been all that was required the delay would

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not have been very long. But experience, if manifold, taught the error of beginning a bombardment without the means of sustaining it uninterruptedly for a considerable period. The reserve of ammunition must be large, and the commencement of the bombardment had to wait till that had been provided.

From the 13th to the 17th of December we lived in a state of quiet, presenting a strange contrast to the bustle and excitement of the early part of the month. To my daily question of the gentlemen of the Crown Prince's staff, "What news?" the reply was very curt, "None." "None!—do you mean that I am to know and to communicate, or really and actually none?" "Really and actually none," was the response. The French had seemingly taken to economise their ammunition. If you wanted to hear any shooting at all, it was necessary to go down into Argenteuil. There there was no cessation of the crackling fire across the river, but it was almost wholly musketry fire. The place was full of interest. It is a town of some size and it was not empty of people. The shops had re-opened, some of them, and a portion of the population having come back, the citizens, men, women, and children, were for ever in the streets gossiping with apparent cheerfulness and unconcern. Over their heads was the constant sing of the Chassepôt bullet, which they minded no more than they might the singing of a bird. When a shell came they ran into the houses, only to emerge when it had burst, to find out what damage it had done. There is a beautiful church in Argenteuil; its steeple made a good observatory. The market place is below it. In the steeple were several huge holes made by shells, and the roofs of the adjoining houses had been severely injured. But the people stood in the market place, the peasants brought in their

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carts, and sold poultry, butter, and cheese there with as much unconcern as if the French batteries and the German soldiers had been miles away. Some casualties occurred, but so far as I could learn they were very few. It almost seemed that the French sharp-shooters on the other bank had some occult means of discerning their countryfolk; I can at least testify to the briskness of their practice against those who were not their countrymen. One day, along with Mr. Sidney Hall, I went into a house which overlooked the esplanade on our bank of the river. The esplanade is about 100 feet wide; then comes the stream, and on the other side were the Frenchmen ever ready. I incautiously showed at the window for less than a minute, and drew quite a brisk fire, more than one of the bullets striking the walls of the house. When we went down into the street we found a Frenchman composedly posting up a proclamation issued by the commandant. There was nothing between him and the river but a loose barricade of timber. It turned out that it was his house in which we had been. Now how was it to be accounted for that he lived there without being shot, while we, wearing like him civilian clothes, could not show for half a minute at a window without being fired at?

Everywhere, as the winter progressed, the people came gradually back to their homes in the villages that were not on the foreposts. Their condition was very bad, yet not so utterly wretched as one might imagine. There must have been great stores of food in the villages around Paris; money would still procure almost anything. There was very little sickness among the native population, notwithstanding the hardships which most of them must have undergone in hiding in the woods, or huddling together in the backlying villages. The health of the

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German troops was exceptionally good. Typhus fever had nearly disappeared, and one hardly ever now heard of dysentery. Rheumatism and bronchitis steadily sent a proportion to the lazarettes, but in no great numbers, and a large proportion of the cases recovered and returned to duty after a few days' lie-by. English ambulance waggons from the depôt at Meaux frequently visited the field lazarettes on the north and east sides during the winter months, and distributed large quantities of stores.

From other districts, too, came cheering tidings of the good work done by other detachments of the "English Ambulance." It cannot be denied, nevertheless, that there was in the late war a vast expenditure of British money with disproportionately small return. Still, the experience gained has been good, and will be found useful, let us hope, if another war should unfortunately call for the services of another such organization. But there are many difficulties in the way. A great one is in the selection of qualified superintendents and organizers, in view of the work to be done. What I saw and learned impressed me with the conviction that to give a surgical character to the ambulance organization, is a mistake in many ways. If an army has not doctors enough of its own, and appeals to neutral Powers for assistance of this kind, it would be well were the organizations for medical aid entirely separate from the ambulance, and that the neutral doctors should work under the orders of the medical authorities of the army to which they may be attached. Squabbles about etiquette, personal tetchiness, and professional jealousies did much to impair the usefulness of that organisation for which Britons so freely put down their money. There ought to be a copious supply of ambulance vehicles of the best patterns extant. These

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might be horsed and furnished with all appliances, and then lent as they stand to the several Powers at war. No object is to be gained by the neutral State finding drivers and medical staff; and there are many embarrassments in the way. The adoption of this plan would leave the course clear for the concentration of the working staff on that part of the organization which concerns itself with the supply of stores to the lazarettes, a branch of the work which the experience of the war demonstrated, can be cultivated by far to the greatest advantage. The staff, from top to bottom, must consist of neutrals. The English ambulance drivers were chiefly Frenchmen, and the Germans looked upon them with great suspicion—not, I believe, invariably without cause. "English ambulance, sir," said a Prussian officer to me, speaking of the menagerie in St. Germains, "an infernal nest of French spies." Swiss drivers would be the best; they are more polyglot, and not such incorrigible jabberers as the Belgians, and Switzerland is in a condition of perpetual neutrality. Place at the head of the affair a strong man with a great command of temper, an entire absence of paltry self-seeking, some experience in kindred work, a man of promptitude, and without fussiness—one with self-respect, but without bristles, and give him the command—make him despotic. And make him responsible too, not only for efficiency, but for economy, and the prevention, or at least the check of malversation.

About this time, a large proportion of the Saxon cavalry left the front of Paris for the north, to strengthen the army under the command of General Manteuffel. I having indulged in a gossip about ambulances, let me ask permission for another about the German cavalry. All the Germans are excellent horsemasters—the Saxons, perhaps, best of any. The men must have taken im-

mense pains with their horses, and that continually, to turn them out in such condition as those I saw march off northward—bright as stars, plump as in barracks. Rations were not very plentiful, nor were quarters always very eligible. Straw, especially, was short. But if a man caters assiduously for his horse, he can materially supplement the regularly issued rations, and this was what the German cavalry man did. The epoch of sore backs had now long passed. In the early days of the campaign there were many sore backs; ascribable partly to the bad pattern of some of the saddles, but more to the young-soldierhood of many of the men. Nothing teaches a dragoon solicitude for his horse's back and success in keeping it sound like a long march during a part of which he has had to walk while a chafe slowly healed. When will the "best-saddle controversy" be definitely decided? My own opinion is, that our cavalry never had a saddle like the old high-cantle and pommel saddle, with the thorough draught right under the tree, with the blanket instead of the numnah, and the cloak and valise well tightened up in the centre. The Germans have no valise, and the want has the result of increasing greatly the size and weight of the wallets. The strain on the withers that might result therefrom is prevented by placing the saddle farther back than with us, but with questionable advantage; and the valise is an article of immense use and convenience to the cavalry-man.

It may interest not alone military men when I note that the German cavalry have almost without exception betaken themselves to the practice of "jockeying" on the trot. We utterly prohibit jockeying, and a goodly proportion of troop defaulterships have connection with addiction to the forbidden practice. The German officers and men alike assert that experience has convinced them

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that to "jockey" in the trot is easier for the horse, spares his back more, and averts his tiring, while it beyond doubt is pleasanter for the horseman in a long journey. We took our cavalry ménage from the Germans, including the balance seat and bumping the saddle. Shall we follow them into the abandonment of the latter? I don't think it matters much. Lord Cardigan was perhaps the strongest opponent of "jockeying" of his day, and when he commanded the "cherry breeches" there were generally more sore backs among them than in any other regiment in the service. I believe that the legitimation of "jockeying" would keep the dragoon longer sound. After bumping the saddle for fourteen or sixteen years a man's legs get strangely crooked, and if he has had a succession of rough trotting mounts it is odds but that he has palpitation of the heart and varicose veins. But the short service system diminishes the significance of this consideration.

On the morning of the 18th, there occurred in our neighbourhood an interesting little episode. A little after eleven o'clock two gunboats came out with a rush from behind Fort La Briche. One following the other, they steamed rapidly down the Seine, puffing out vigorously brown jets of smoke. They never fired, although with the glass one could make out the gunners standing by the long gun in the bow of each, but held on their steady way making for Epinay. Presently there opened fire on them our batteries on the slope in front of Montmorency, and as they got nearer, those recently prepared on Mont D'Orgimont chimed in. The shells splashed into the water and burst on the banks, but still the gallant little craft held on their way. When opposite Epinay there was a stoppage, and it seemed that a landing was contemplated from the vessels, but if so, the fire from

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Mont D'Orgimont was too warm to make the undertaking practicable. The boats, probably out of bravado, fired a round or two at a necessarily high elevation toward Mont D'Orgimont, and after a seemingly irresolute movement or two, took their rapid course backward as they came. There were troops on board the gunboats, but only a comparative handful on both; however, amidships in one there stood a group apart who seemed to be officers, and it is conjectured, no doubt correctly, that the expedition was a reconnaissance to spy out the condition of the land in the direction of Epinay, which, it will be remembered, was the scene of one of the many sorties of the 30th of November. If this was the case, the reconnoiterers could hardly have found grounds for much encouragement towards another attempt, for the positions had been materially strengthened since the date of the last attempt, and French troops would now have found it very difficult to occupy Epinay by a *coup de main.*

The continuance of quietude on the front tempted me on the 19th, to set out for a ride round to Lagny, a little town on the east of Paris, some distance in the rear, in order to see something as to the transmission and condition of the wounded and the French prisoners from the recent battle in the Orleans district. Lagny was the terminus of the Eastern Railway, and thither therefore, necessarily collected all and everything requiring transmission to Germany. "What a glorious thing it would be for the newspapers if their war correspondents were endowed with the gift of ubiquity," was the quaint remark made to me by a young subaltern of the German Guards who stood beside me in the lee of the white house on the summit of the height overhanging Stains and Villetaneuse, whither, leaving my horse in Groslay, I had mounted for one last reassuring look at the front

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and at Paris, before venturing out of range. I suppose the multiplicity of objects of interest in the prospect before him prompted him to the reflection. The long chimneys of the St. Denis factories were smoking as vigorously as if they had been Black Country chimneys when a batch of urgent orders are in hand. What did they smoke for? Was it machinery below them grinding corn for the two million beleaguered ones? Were brawny men at work in the forges below pouring molten iron into moulds, hammering the outside of cannon barrels, rifling the bores, filling the breeches, casting the projectiles which these cannon were designed to pitch among the ranks of the enemy? Did they indicate powder manufactories? Perilous juxtaposition was not to be studied in such a pinch as Paris was in now. Were they the chimneys of bakeries, or of huge steam sausage-machines for chopping up horseflesh? Whatever they represented they were smoking away with a curious air of manufacturing prosperity that seemed utterly incompatible either with a bloody siege, a close blockade, or threatened starvation. Were his companion ubiquitous, thought the Guardsman, the puzzle—for to us, as to most, those factories were a puzzle—would cease to be so, nay, never would have existed. Then there were those waspish-looking, low, black little gunboats every now and then showing their sharp snouts out from behind the crown work of La Briche. What were they doing? Had they any intention of another reconnaissance? Were they acting as ferry-boats, or had they parties of ladies on board, to whom these curious grasshopper-like motions afforded pleasure? First, there comes out one—puffing as if she were flapping her chest with her arms to raise her courage. Out she comes bodily with a dash, and a big gun from where I stand might cover even her stern.

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Then she seems to lose heart again. You almost think you hear the skipper crying "Ease her," "Stop her," and then the word is "Turn astern." She goes back in a droll pirouetting fashion, feeling, as it were, from side to side with that huge antenna on her deck. I take it she came out to see whether she could not find an eligible object at which to discharge her gun. No reliefs are crossing the plain, the officers in Epinay are at dinner, men have learned to lie close in Deuil, Montmagny, and Stains. So she has had her journey for nothing. A few minutes after, two came out abreast, and, so far as we could make out with the glass, there were groups on the deck that seemed officers. Was yesterday's reconnaissance, then, not enough? Was there still a craving for an attack upon Epinay, notwithstanding yesterday's lesson from Mont d'Orgimont? Perhaps Trochu was himself aboard, with Ducrot and Vinoy in the other craft, so that the destinies of Paris might not be entrusted to one fragile concern of tin-plates and maple pannelling. In the green foreground of Gennevilliers we could dimly see masses of men, now to all appearance swelling into densely packed bodies, anon elongating into columns. What was their purpose, or had they one? Were they listening to a speech from Trochu, were they collecting there to be ferried over by the gunboats upon Epinay, in case these should make a rapid voyage in that direction; or were they being marched away in the direction of Bezons, in view of a contemplated renewal of the attempt to bridge the Seine at that point? Again the lieutenant's remark as to ubiquity came home to me. But he had his explanation ready about the shifting soldiers, whose appearance was shaking my Lagny resolution. "They are drilling the stupid fellows of Mobiles," was what he had to say about it; being very anxious for Lagny, I ac-

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cepted the explanation. Boom, and boom again, one gun from Du Nord, one from La Briche in momentary succession. With a far-off sough we heard the whistle of the shells through the air—that is a sound that carries far; but we heard not the dull clash that is the signal of the impact, nor the sharper crack that the explosion produces. Was the fire against Stains, or Le Bourget, or Epinay, or into miscellaneous space? Non-ubiquitous, we could not tell; but it was some consolation to know in this case that ubiquity of presence might have been accompanied with ubiquity of danger. Ten minutes more, and the same double salute; still another ten minutes, and the repetition with such clockwork regularity, that showed a mutual understanding by signal, telegraph, or otherwise, between the gunners of the two forts. A fourth double discharge, this time almost simultaneous and anticipatory of the expiry of the statutory ten minutes. That far-off sough comes nearer, nearer, nearer—cuts the air, as it seems, so close to our ears that I, at all events, swerve involuntarily. There is no mistake about the crash of the explosion this time—far too near to be pleasant. It is clear that we, and none other, were the marks for these two shells, at least. What keen dogs they must be behind those grim embrasures! Good afternoon, Herr Lieutenant, my winsome youngster, smiling there from ear to ear, as if gunpowder had been an amalgam of your mother's milk, and as if shells had been the *bon-bons* of your boyhood. I am not sufficiently acquainted with your domestic affairs to know if you have anybody whose livelihood depends on your existence otherwise than in little pieces—I have, so adieu to you, with all decent precipitation.

The shadows were falling as I rode through the Guardsmen in Sarcelles, Arnonville, and Gonesse, where

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the men for forepost duty are turning out burdened with wrappers of the strangest kinds. Here is a man with a sheepskin door-mat lashed round him; and surely that is a Brussels carpet that this big grenadier has over his shoulders. If you were to hear the alarm sound this moment, down would go the wraps, and forward would go their bearers, all the more supple because they understood how to keep themselves warm when the alarm was not sounding. When shall we learn that efficiency in the field does not crucially depend on trimness on parade; and when shall the adjutant of a British regiment understand that for a private to go on night guard with a comforter instead of a stock is not a fearful portent of the end of the world?

Have the artillerymen in Sevran been fishing in the Arctic Seas, and is that their catch of walruses that I see on my left, as I ride through the little town? Synonymes are often convenient, and this synonyme for a siege gun we owe to the master of all of us in the profession of a war correspondent. The Sevran walruses have come hither by train—preserved in ice, no doubt. It is cold weather, and a considerable number of them are allowed to huddle together for the sake of warmth, but some of them have been cut off from the "school"—that is the technical word, I believe—and are located in smaller groups farther to the front, placed in localities where, it is true, they have a certain shelter consisting of earthen embankments in front of them, but where that general shelter is, to a great extent, nullified by the gaps cut in their immediate front—gaps which those who have to do with walrus fishing have a habit of calling embrasures. But cold though the unwieldy denizens of the Arctic regions may be in such exposed positions, they are certainly not to be allowed to starve. These streams of

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waggons, drawn by teams of strong horses, and accompanied by men in uniform, are returning empty from the conveyance of food to the inhabitants of the deep. True they may have to hunger for their rations yet a while, but the meal will be all the heavier when it does come. What is the use of administering *hors d'œuvre* when the dinner is not ready? I was concerned, however, to notice that this catch of walruses ran smaller than one could wish.

I am bound for Le Vert Galant, and should turn away from the front at Livry; but let me go a little farther southward, through the *col* of Bondy, to see what that old *bête noire* Mont Avron is like in the thickening gloom. The place is true to its established character. From the range of the fringe of felled forest through which I have penetrated I can only faintly trace the familiar outlines, so rapidly has the darkness fallen. But—Flash! up goes the electric light from Nogent and Rosny, and bang comes the first shell—the "top of the evening" from Avron. What a humbug, to be sure, is that same electric light. The French were always using it. You saw it scintillating on the summit of Valérien and flashing out toward Le Bourget from Montmartre. To the defenders of Paris all it could do is to make darkness visible; to its besiegers, if they had only been in the mind, it would have been a gratis illumination that would be worth any money. In the foreground of the electric flashes from the forts before me, lies Avron as clear as if it were noonday. But Chelles, Montfermeil, Noisy, or Villiers might have been swallowed up in an earthquake, so utterly invisible are they. Oh for something else than the meagre walruses by the windmill and on the vineberg. Half-a-dozen hours pelting with real artillery on those impudent batteries on the verge and crest of the plateau so brilliant under the

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rays of the electric light—then in the small hours a storming party of one battalion of Saxons and another of Guardsmen; a bayonet fight on the summit—and then hurrah for the black, white, and red flag, to flaunt wherewithal the gunners of Nogent and Rosny. It would not be a light cause for which the Saxons, having once got a grip of the summit, would surrender it now. Well, let us live in hope, in early hope. How long? How long? I get angry as I look at the battery, made right in our faces, but the other day comparatively harmless, and at whose door, young as it is, lie the deaths of so many stalwart Saxons, whose corpses will fertilise next year's crops in the fatal horseshoe. I get angry and impatient when I think that this place, which our ground dominates so that not a gun could ever have been mounted but for unaccountable *laissez faire*, should test the elasticity of our forepost line in a direction that I am disgusted and savage to have the knowledge of. The *laissez faire* days were over; but there seldom comes an indulgence without a penalty, and on many graves around this side of Paris, the pioneers might have substituted for the "Hier ruhen in Gott," the words, "Here lie the consequences of vacillation."

Making for Lagny on the morning of the 20th, I was amusing myself, between Pomponne and my destination, by noting the variety of railway lines from which the carriages composing a single reserve train had been drafted—Berg, Hanover, Taunus, Halle-Cassel, Westfalen, Saxe, and half-a-dozen more, when I observed a half troop of Blue Hussars on the other side of the water coming at a trot down to the Kriegsbrücke. The horsemen were followed by a string of carriages, which were closed up by another half troop of Dragoons. What could it mean? Was the King ful-

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filling the frantic prognostications of the Hamburgh merchant, whose ravings I have chronicled, and flying to Rheims in twelve two-horse post-waggons? Had Trochu yielded himself up on the sly, and was he off to Wilhelmshöhe *viâ* Lagny and Bouillon, after the manner of his quondam royal master? Had the Crown Princess been on a flying visit to her royal and gallant husband, and warned out of Versailles by "Big Josceline?" How could I tell? None the more could I understand the *raison d'être* of the procession when the escort and the post-waggons came past me at a trot. I saw faces not wont to be seen on the war path—faces grave with thought, attenuated by long watching over the midnight lamp, civilian faces and dresses in every carriage. Although I did not express myself audibly, I shared the sentiments of the honest Landwehrman in the gutter, who bluntly roared out to one of the postilions, "I wish you'd tell me who the devil you have there!" The man's quaint coolness reminded me of an Ost Preussen Marketender, who, passing during the memorable interview between the ex-Emperor and Bismarck after Sedan, bawled out lustily, "*Wo ist denn der Napoleon?*" The cortége whirled on, and I rode after it, but was accidentally so delayed that the waggons had discharged their freight in front of the Lagny-Railway-station some time before I got there. Very hungry, and with a trust in the chapter of accidents, begotten of some experience, to purvey somehow the information I needed, I turned aside to the 'officers' casino'—a modest eating-room, on the mess principle, established opposite the station. The place was full of the faces I had seen in the carriages. The owners of the faces were hard at work—very. Sausage, ham, cold meat, were disappearing with creditable rapidity; the wine gurgled from the bottles, and

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a silence reigned such as is wont to exist among very hungry men. No wonder that they were hungry. The thirty civilians I saw before me, in the fur coats, the fur caps, and some, indeed, in fur boots; one man, with white moustaches, many of them with bald heads, and other signs and tokens of grave and reverend signiors, were the deputation of the North German Reichstag, who were on their way home from Versailles, after tendering to King William the crown and title of Emperor of Germany, and they had not eaten since they left Versailles, after a very early breakfast. It was a strange sight, no bad emblem of a nation which loves peace, while it never shuns righteous war. Here in the low-browed, narrow room, waited on by soldiers in canvas undress, whose straw beds were visible in the kitchen as the door stood open, interspersed with officers in uniform—here a general, there a lieutenant, the street in front crowded with the wounded of two nations and half-a-dozen principalities, its stones echoing to the din of galloping orderlies, to the rattle of marketender carts, and the roll of tumbrils; here sat the fathers in Israel, men wise in council; men famous in literature; men whose names are a tower of strength on every bourse in Europe. When has a Parliament been seen on campaign before? I can recal no later instance than when the Council of the Covenant went with the Covenanting fighting men into the field—themselves, too, fighting men. Truly this modern Parliament on campaign took to the *rôle* very kindly, to judge by the good knives and forks they played. Having had the honour to be recognised by one of the members, Baron Rothschild, I was most courteously requested to take a seat at one of the tables. The Baron, in urbanity and geniality, is a host in himself; at the same table sat the following members of the deputations:—Präsident

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Simson, Landrath von Cranach, Dr. Weigel, Herr Puttkamer, Baron Nordeck, Count Hompesch, Herr von Sybel, and Herr Sombart. They told me, with much feeling, how the tears had trickled down King Wilhelm's cheeks when the grandest proffer of the age was made to him. They expressed with hearty warmth their pleasure that when the time came that Wilhelm's son should reign in his stead, the Princess Royal of England should be Empress of Germany; and before Herr Director came to say that the train was ready, one toast was drunk, and in that all the room joined with acclamation—"Prosperity to Germany and England; may they ever be friendly." Baron Nordeck it was who gave the toast. And then "the house adjourned" into the snug first-class carriages, "honourable members," not a few of them, showing from their pockets what one might have taken to be the muzzles of pistols, designed for protection against Francs-tireurs, but which in reality were the necks of wine-bottles. I could not help being amused at the gentleman who was charged with the duty of settling the reckoning. It was stiff, unquestionably—164 thalers for a simple cold luncheon for thirty-one persons. No doubt the casino keeper would have replied to a complaint to the same effect as a Scotch change-house keeper is reported to have used to James VI., "Ye dinna come this gate ilka day, your Majesty." Certainly it is not often that a Lagny marketender gets a chance of cutting into the purse of the German Reichstag. The paymaster was disposed to grumble, but I ventured to point out that it was all, so to speak, in the family, since the man was a German, and since Germany was paying the costs of the delegation—a view which the good deputy, perhaps, all the readier adopted, because his colleagues, getting over before him, were picking up all the best seats in the train.

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The deputation went the same night as far as Epernay, where, in its corporate capacity, it was to break up. I was forced to resist a very cordial invitation to accompany it as far as the city of champagne, but my duties called me elsewhere. Prince Carl's surgeon, who accompanied the delegation, had with him a cage containing a Paris carrier pigeon, which had been captured with its despatch, and which he was conveying home as a present to Princess Carl.

So pressing at the first strain were the needs, and so ghastly the misery, of the French prisoners passing through Lagny on their way from Orleans to captivity in Germany, that Captain Nevill, the chief representative in Meaux of the British National Society, had wisely thought it his duty for once to break through the trammels of rule and regulations, that the horrors of the situation might be alleviated. It would tax the vivid pen of MM. Erckmann-Chatrain to depict the sufferings of these poor wretches. I was told of one batch that came in so ravenous with hunger that the men grubbed in the gutter after turnip-tops and bones, and turned over dirt-heaps in search for stray crusts of bread. At Meaux, when the train containing these unfortunates passed through, the Society people threw hams into the carriages, which were seized and worried by the ravenous men, as dogs worry bones. Between wounded and prisoners, the German organization for the time broke down. It was little wonder. The average daily quota of prisoners from the 1st up to the 17th was 1000 men; the number of wounded averaged little less. Lagny did its best, but it is never a great place, and its resources had been severely taxed for months before. The cry of the great distress reached Meaux, and Captain Nevill and his colleagues could not withstand it. On the 17th December Mr.

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Barrington Kennett came on to Lagny with twenty huge cases of preserved meat; next day followed Captain Nevill with 200 leviathan loaves. Mr. Kennett was left at Lagny in charge of the arrangements, and every one spoke in terms of enthusiasm, as to the manner in which he had accomplished what he set himself to do. The German organization had righted again—it was never long in its broadside—and now the arrangement was in force that every prisoner on his way through should receive a lump of bacon and another of bread, while the British Society, in case of another collapse, continued to keep in reserve a store of preserved meat and bread for administration in that event. The horrors of Lagny during December transcended all imagination. Fancy an average of 1000 wounded men pouring in day by day, a fresh thousand every day, unfed, their wounds undressed, bitter cold, and jolted almost to distraction. There was no hospital in the place. No hospital, had it been as big as new St. Thomas's twice over, would have sufficed. Sheds, houses, railway vans, the lamp-room in the railway station, the church, the Mairie, were turned into hospitals. I saw one courtyard on which opened four or five squalid rooms. Into these eighty wounded Bavarians had perforce to be placed for the night, supperless, fireless—hopeless, I should think, in their utter misery. In one day came 1800 wounded, nearly 100 of whom were officers. The men were put into the church; there was no other place for them. During the night a certain man was wanted particularly for some reason. Diligent search was made for him among the masses of wounded men, but it was like looking for a needle in a bundle of hay. The search was unsuccessful. As I walked about the streets of Lagny, I continually met strange "mounted men." Now it was a man on the back of another, the

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man carried having a leg swathed in bandages. Now came a pair carrying a man in what boys call a king's chair. All were on their way to the station, the platform of which was continually littered with a kind of luggage that made one's heart ache. There, at full length on the litter lay the poor broken fellows, looking up at you with their great, calm, patient eyes. I saw a clumsy fellow stumble over one of the prostrate forms, and all the chiding he received was a wan pinched smile. There was a lady at Lagny whose name deserves to be written in letters of gold wherever are recorded the names of devoted philanthropists; Madame Simon, the lady superintendent of the Saxon ambulances. Day and night did this noble woman wrestle with the torrent of human misery that had surged upon Lagny since the beginning of the month. The church of Lagny had come to strange uses; the previous week, a refuge for 1700 wounded men; two nights before my visit, the barracks for 1000 Bavarians—a new draft pressing to the front; last night, the prison-house of some 1200 Frenchmen. I went among them into the stench —stench and scene reminding me of the church of Donchéry the day after Sedan. Most of the prisoners I saw were boys, some the merest children, unable to carry a gun, much less to use one. Their guards were very kind and gentle with them, poor wretches; it would have been difficult to be harsh with creatures so utterly down and crushed.

At six o'clock, on the morning of the 21st, a good friend routed me out of a comfortable bed in Lagny, with the information that fighting was imminent. Taking at once to horse, I heard nothing as I rode for the first two miles, but had abundant confirmation everywhere that my friend's intelligence was good. I overtook a pontoon train going at a trot towards Chelles; the officer believed

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that that was the point to be threatened, and the bridge might be useful to facilitate the passage of succours from the region of Champs, Malnoue, and Villiers. At Le Pin I found the three field batteries of the 24th Division quartered there, limbered up and taking the road. Their orders were likewise for Chelles, and I was tempted to accompany them. But as I spoke with the officers, there came down on the wind the sound of heavy firing from the direct front towards Clichy, and so I resisted the impulse to go to Chelles, where there was undoubtedly the most tempting district for an infantry attack, and headed up the slope to General Montbé's head-quarters in Clichy. The terrace of the château he inhabited commands a noble view of the whole country as far as Dugny and Gonesse, and this country was the theatre of the cannonade that lasted till the afternoon. By eight o'clock, when I arrived, the fire was continuous. The centre of the German position was that fortified camp between Sevran and Le Blanc Mesnil which I have already described, and around Aulnay, in the very middle of that stretch, were the batteries chiefly concentrated. The German force engaged there, so far as I could learn, was as follows:—Three batteries of the Guards Artillery, three batteries contributed by the 23rd Division of the 12th Army Corps, and three or four batteries of the Artillery Division of the 12th Army Corps. There were reserve batteries in addition to this, but those were not engaged. Infantry and cavalry supports were partly drawn out, partly standing ready in their quarters. The 103rd Regiment, the garrison of Clichy, were on the plateau of Raincy, to watch the French infantry that had been observed concentrating in Bondy.

The French artillery seemed engaged all round. Avron was firing over Villemonble at Clichy and Montfermeil;

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and Forts Noisy and Romainville were vigorously following suit against Raincy, Gagny, and the German posts in the forest of Bondy, which were also dividing the attention of Avron. The batteries at Bondy and Drancy were playing on Livry, Sevran, and Aulnay; and Aubervilliers, in combination with de l'Est, was throwing shells into Le Bourget, Pont Iblon, and Dugny. Du Nord was bombarding Pierrefitte and Stains. The French infantry was concentrated between Bondy and Baubigny, one demonstration towards Clichy, and another toward Chelles, having been arrested earlier in the morning.

About a quarter to nine Aubervilliers, de l'Est, and St. Denis seemed to be concentrating their fire on Le Bourget. Six or eight French batteries had formed line with their left on Drancy, and were partly firing obliquely into Le Bourget at very short range, partly firing on the German line behind the inundations. I could see shells bursting in Pont Iblon, also behind our batteries in Aulnay. The French fire was quite furious, half a dozen guns flashing out at once; but it seemed wild. The German was regular as the beats of the pendulum of a clock. An occasional shell from Avron was tumbling into Clichy. At nine o'clock came a rattle of musketry on the wind. It sounded from Le Bourget. Were the French infantry pressing on the battalion of Guards occupying it? It sounded like it. It grew louder, and then there was a lull. It sprung up again nearer Pont Iblon. "The Guards must be in retreat towards Pont Iblon" was the exclamation on our terrace. The hellish shell fire concentrated on the place was enough of itself to drive them out. There were the shells bursting all along the road towards Pont Iblon. They must, mark, surely the line of the retreating Guards, the shells following as they fell back. Now it seemed as if they were safe behind Pont

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Iblon, for the batteries above the causeway through the inundations opened, their way seemingly free, since friends were no longer in front of their muzzles. It afterwards turned out that we were wrong in the conclusion that the Guards had been wholly expelled from Le Bourget.

The French, in the teeth of Pont Iblon's fire, had got up batteries on the chaussée before Le Bourget, and seemed to be exchanging shots with the Pont Iblon batteries at point-blank range. A German battery at Sevran was beginning to speak in the direction of Bondy. I could see the shells from Aulnay bursting in the middle of the French batteries at Drancy, as the wind for the moment blew the smoke away. Still they held their ground. Fire seemed opening out towards us from Avron, and now and then I heard the waspish sing of a chassepot bullet. At half-past ten the French were brightening up all round. The forts were, without exception, firing as hard as they could. That white smoke I saw in the far distance must have been the Lunette de Stains playing into the village of the same name. Did the firing go farther round towards Montmorency and Epinay? I could not tell for certain; but the direction of the noise and the smoke argued as much. At eleven o'clock both sides were at it ding-dong, without advantage on either side. Putting out of sight the forts, the French had the greatest strength of artillery engaged. I could make out, as I reckoned, eighteen field batteries. The line of guns to the right of Drancy was lengthening. How they did fire, to be sure! Could they have been aiming as they blazed away with such rapidity? Splash —splash—I saw now with the glass that most of their shells were bursting in the inundation in front of our position in Aulnay. That could break no bones. Why,

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they had set the Forest of Bondy on fire, on their own side of the water! If they had meant to follow up with infantry, this would have inconvenienced them seriously. Kr-r-r-r, kr-r-r-r—one ought to know that sound if he ever heard it before. Where could they have got their mitrailleuses at work? That indicated close quarters. Had they got their infantry edged forward on the sly at some point we could not see from our position, and were they backed up by the mitrailleuse? Why, the sound was coming from two points at once. The glass explained the mystery. Near Drancy, and on to Sevran if it were not for the interruption, runs the Soissons railway. Below us, by Bondy, and so round to Villemonble and Gagny, runs the Strassburg line. There was a mitrailleuse train on each line. General Montbé saw it first—the locomotive puff-puffing out from behind the trees of Drancy, having the mitrailleuse waggons before it. There was the kr-r-r-r again. The concern was playing dodging tactics—it came out to fire, and scuttled back to load. Another mitrailleuse train was at the same game on our direct front—on the Strassburg line—that was the song of some of the bullets. I wondered how von Schönberg and Hammerstein, and the rest of the 103rd fellows on Raincy were relished their closer contiguity. At twelve an orderly rode in with the information that in the direction of Noisy-le-Grand French infantry were pushing forward, and that a battery had been established and opened fire in the same place, up the valley against Chelles; also that all the batteries south of Avron were at work playing on the horseshoe. This had a serious meaning. The artillery in the neighbourhood of Chelles would be able to honour none of our drafts now, if we should want them. It looked as if we might need them. The fire was as hot as ever, the

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French activity seeming unabated. Our guns were pounding away in a steady, business-like way—they would not spurt. Artillery spurts never pay—infantry spurts sometimes, but not so often as is generally thought. The "walrusses" by Sevran were asleep; it was evident we were not firing a gun that was not a field one. At a quarter to one there came a 24th Division battery past Clichy toward Sevran. It was one of those that had left Le Pin in the morning. This was reassuring as to the state of things to our south by Chelles and the horse-shoe. The battery could not well have been spared if it had been very hot there. A shell—it must have come from Fort Noisy—burst in the battery as it traverses the space at our feet between Clichy and Livry; one horse —a detachment beast—was down, that was all. They had got the range from Avron now pretty closely. Where we were standing was hot quarters now. Bang. General, you are not hurt, are you? A close shave, in all conscience; a 24lb. shell came right in among us, alighting among the stacked arms of a picquet, and sending the needle-guns flying right and left, and, for that matter, the men too; not a soul hurt, but all smothered with gravel and mud. At one o'clock it was evident our fire was beginning to tell. The batteries flanking Le Bourget were shutting up. They were beginning to retreat. What was that burst of black smoke behind them? The French must have been trying to burn Le Bourget. They had succeeded so far; there was a jet of fire, but the place must have been washed, surely, in the composition ballet girls use for their skirts; it would not take to burning kindly. I supposed it was the wet straw that raised so dense a smoke. At half-past one there was a lull. The French were changing position. The lull was only on their side, ours was pegging away as if driven by steam.

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There were the Le Bourget batteries at work again, but farther behind; they must have limbered up and been falling back, and suddenly unlimbered again. There was a gap in the line of batteries on the right of Drancy before another quarter of an hour had passed. The centre batteries seemed to have dropped out. What is the artillery word of command? If it had been cavalry I should say they were retiring by columns of troops from the centre. The front batteries had wakened up again as hot as ever to cover the movement of the others no doubt. By half-past two the French artillery was all but silenced, and in full retreat. All the firing we now saw was our guns milling away steadily as if paid by the piece, and the French forts of De l'Est, Du Nord, and Aubervilliers. In the distance, under the hill of Ecouen, which shuts in the horizon, I saw smoke rising. Perhaps Dugny or Garges might have been fired. Perhaps a shell had lodged in a straw stack. By three o'clock hardly anything was audible to our north front. Noise still came from the direction of Montfermeil, Chelles, and the south. The neighbourhood of Clichy, for the time, seemed to be attracting exceptionally hot fire. Shells were falling on the slope below us with disagreeable frequency.

Although in other parts of the line, at least to the northward, the firing seemed to be dying away as the early winter twilight came on, shells continued to be thrown toward Clichy, with perhaps greater frequency than in the earlier part of the afternoon. About five o'clock the fire from the German guns about Aulnay, which had been dying away as it ceased to evoke a response, suddenly flared up again, and continued very brisk for about a quarter of an hour. It appeared to me as if the French were disposed to halt at least some of their batteries for the night in advance of the position

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out of which they had come in the morning, and that the warm fire of their opponents was intended to prevent the execution of this design. The French guns, which had been utterly silent for half an hour, could not refrain from replying to this fire, however feebly, and they were unlimbered—a couple of batteries, in the flat some distance to the north-east of Baubigny. It was very pretty, in the all but darkness, to watch the rapid flashes, and the shells bursting in the air, like a comet that has knocked out its brains against some aërial rock. But the pyrotechnic display was not of long continuance. The German fire was too steady and rapid to admit of a lengthened interlude of the illumination of the inundation waters on the part of the French by the bursting shells on its margin. All grew silent and dark again over against Baubigny, and it was as if the French array—the forts, whose grey embrasures had been visible in the daylight, the serried batteries of artillery which had maintained their share of the day's din with so much spirit, and the dense battalions of infantry men which had done nothing all day but hold themselves in reserve—as if all these were blotted off the black face of the night. But not for long. From the far-off firing platform of Fort de l'Est suddenly flashed out the electric light, followed by a flash that heralded the dull thud which, as it seemed quite a minute after, struck the ear. At what De l'Est was firing we could not tell—if indeed at anything, and not in pursuance of that Gascon custom to which the Paris forts were addicted, of having the "last word" in every affair, no matter what its issue. Presently there rose against the sky another light farther south—directly between Clichy and Paris, a whole chain of lights so numerous that they blended as in one great fire, and made the heavens bright above them. These were the bivouac fires of the French camping in

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the open in the position they had taken up on the previous night, their right resting on Bondy, their left on La Courneuve. There they lay—foiled indeed in whatever they contemplated to-day, if it was of an actively offensive nature, but still stubbornly refusing to relinquish it. They were at hand for anything. To-morrow their infantry might be raging against the needle-guns of the Saxons lying before us on Raincy. To-morrow their field artillery, changing its direction, and backed by Avron, might be pounding inconveniently into Montfermeil. To-morrow, changing its front, the Bondy-Baubigny force might be supporting a division farther to the south or a heavy attack towards Chelles; we could not tell. There they lay, at all events, the object of an undefined uneasiness, in which there was no trepidation, but something of nervousness. Ah, well, sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.

What was the *raison d'être* of this great powder-burning demonstration? It could hardly have been intended as an attempt to break through. Speculations in the early part of the day had been various. It might, thought some, be a reconnaissance in force to discover by drawing their fire whether the besiegers had any heavy artillery mounted on the works between Sevran and Pont Iblon, with future intentions towards the forts. It might be, thought others, that, in the knowledge of the railways being in use as far as Gonesse and Sevran, the speculation might have been ventured by the French that to these termini were centreing the siege guns, and that under a heavy artillery fire the infantry might get the chance of making a dash in an exploring and destroying expedition. But in my opinion the cue was given to the motive of the day's work in the terms of a communication made by General von Montbé, at his hospitable dinner-

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table. All day long heavy columns of French infantry massed on and about the slope of Avron, and as far forward as Neuilly, had been threatening the gap of Chelles. This alluvial tract presented several obvious advantages for a sortie. It is quite flat, is open in the physical sense all the way to Lagny—all the way to Chalons for that matter —and the French holding Neuilly as they did, already sat astride of the flat country, and could make their dispositions without annoyance or exposure on the same level as their succeeding operations. Then there was no river to cross. But for that somewhat sturdy obstacle, the Saxons, there would have been a straight run home unobstructed by water or broken ground all the way, as I have said, to Lagny; and behind a sallying force there stood up the formidable Avron, a most judicious bottle holder, and something more. No doubt there were disadvantages to set against all these advantages. This world is a vale of crosses, and nobody can expect to have it all his own way. The bluff of Montfermeil would have enfiladed a force coming up the flat toward Chelles as soon as it had shown out from Neuilly. The height behind Chelles looked nearly direct in the face of any such force; and the Germans had batteries of field-guns both on the bluff of Montfermeil and the heights around Chelles. Those heights, too, narrow the fair way considerably, and from the outset it is the reverse of too large. Still I had wondered that the French, who had essayed ground far less eligible in a physical sense for a sortie, should not have tried this. It was clear that I was not alone in my opinion, for Chelles was the line taken by the 24th Division Artillery in the morning from Le Pin. The French columns —a whole division it was known—were waiting under and around Nogent opposite the gap, ready to throw themselves into it. But they knew of old the results of a

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concentration at any point of the deadly field artillery of the Germans. Had they come on directly, and with no diversion, what would have hindered it, but that the Saxon batteries from the Marne to the inundations, the Guards batteries from Livry to Gonesse, should have been waiting there for them across the throat of the gap at Chelles, and on the crest of Montfermeil? Wherefore was made a great artillery demonstration, supported with infantry, to look in earnest on the north-eastern face, in the hopes to draw off the artillery from the Chelles positions, and leave the coast comparatively clear for an attack. The plan might have succeeded with a weaker artillery than that possessed by the Germans—that, as it was, it was not partially successful, I am not quite prepared to assert. Any how, the French division about two o'clock thought itself justified in advancing to the attack up the northern bank of the Marne.

What followed, General von Montbé had not learned when I left Clichy. But when I came on to the headquarters of the 12th Army Corps in Le Vert Galant, I found that Ville Evrart and La Maison Blanche, the two keys to the Prussian outpost line athwart the alluvial plain, had been taken in the afternoon by the French, and that the staff were waiting for information concerning the result of an attempt which had been ordered to recover those positions under cover of the darkness. The attempt was successful. At six o'clock in the evening the whole of the 106th Saxon Regiment simultaneously fell upon Ville Evrart and La Maison Blanche. The latter, a minor detached post, was first taken, the capture including a major and five officers, the former of whom must have been making the rounds, and about fifty men. Ville Evrart followed, and it contained 500 or more defenders, who were all made prisoners. Some of the out-

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lying enclosures on the western side of Ville Evrart still remained for the night in the hands of the French; but in the morning the Saxons got possession of them also. The French made hardly any resistance in either of the two places. They had settled down comfortably for the night, and when the Saxons burst in upon them, were utterly panic-stricken. The prisoners said that everybody believed the Saxons had been lying in ambush in the cellars, and had rushed out on a given signal. The major protested against his capture with comical lugubriousness. "It was not gentlemanly warfare," he argued, "to take a man at advantage when he had his boots off and was thinking about supper. He understood there was some kind of tacit pact that there was to be no fighting after sundown, and of this the surprise was a reprehensible infraction." He could not, however, argue either his liberty back or the Saxons out of La Maison Blanche.

The chief loss of the day was sustained by the 1st Battalion of the Queen Elizabeth Regiment, old friends and good friends of mine. The battalion, which the reader may remember, had headed the attack which retook Le Bourget on the 31st of October, had again terrible reason to remember that village. Of its remnant of officers left, five more went down on the 21st of December, 117 men were killed and wounded, and some sixty were taken prisoners. The chief, Hauptmann von Altrock, seemed to bear a charmed life. He had on the 31st of October fourteen bullet holes through his loose mackintosh, and not a single wound. On this sortie of the 21st December his officers fell around him, but he never was touched. A severe mishap befell a very dear friend of mine, young Freiherr von Brockdorff, a lieutenant in the Kaiser Franz Regiment, and the nephew of General von Moltke. He was shot through the chest

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near the close of the action, while occupying, with a portion of his battalion, an exposed line of barricades closing in the village of Le Blanc Mesnil. A brighter lad I never knew. He was a student at college, in Berlin, when the war broke out, and joined the army at once. He had won his commission and the iron cross. Now the war had brought him something else. I saw him in one of the Gonesse lazarettes the next day but one. He was lying nearly comatose, and very weak. He believed it was the splinter of a shell that drilled the jagged hole in his side; but the surgeons were certain it must have been a stray chassepot bullet, or one of the mitrailleuse balls which the cuirassed train sent over. His elder brother, a lieutenant in the Thuringian Uhlan regiment, had been sent round by General von Moltke to see how fared it with the lad. The tidings which he took back were the reverse of good; but the fresh-constitutioned youngster pulled through ultimately, and by this time is no doubt a healthy veteran, proud of his scars.

Many circumstances occurred during this campaign, tending to imperil the continued existence of the Geneva Convention. One abuse of its stipulations occurred on the night of this artillery duel. The French had collected their wounded in the village of Bondy—fearfully wounded most of them must have been, for shell-splinters do not make neat holes in men. Bondy being in a line with the front of their position, and one of the keys to it in the event of that position being assaulted, they had run up the red cross, and doubtless there would have been the cry of "brutes and barbarians" if that cross had not been respected. It had not been fired on, but none the less was it a flagrant abuse of the terms of the Convention, which stipulates expressly that no Feld Lazarette shall be erected in a position too near the front or of

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value in a military sense. Neither side adhered closely to this definition, and the consequence was that each had stories of asserted atrocities to narrate against the other. Speaking of wounded, our losses at Clichy during the day consisted of a field-postman's foot damaged, a soldier severely wounded by a splinter and a *Krankenträger* cut in two by a shell. In all from 500 to 600 prisoners were captured, chiefly when Le Bourget was retaken after its partial occupation by the French, headed by their gallant corps of sailors. Several of these were among the prisoners, but most had died as they had charged, with an implacable fury that disdained quarter. On the morning of the 22nd the French looked very threatening for a time; they sent forward about a brigade of infantry against Chelles, which coalesced with the troops yet remaining in Ville Evrart. But a hot fire from Noisy-le-Grand and the opposite bank of the river between it and Cournay was enough to cause a retreat with some precipitation.

The air was clearer on the 22nd December than on any day within my recollection since I had come to the scene of operations before Paris. From the advanced forepost in the Forest of Bondy, from which I looked out upon the beautiful panorama, Montmartre did not seem two miles off. I could discern the sun-glints on the windows of the Cathedral of St. Denis far round on the right front. Bondy, directly in our front, seemed so close that you might almost have sent a stone the length of its church steeple, and yet the French were in it, although they kept very quiet and out of sight. Still, occasionally a few were to be seen prowling about, and the smoke which hung in the air behind Bondy marked their camp fires. On the left front was the abrupt rise of the long ridge crowned by Forts Noisy and Rosny—

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right between us and the latter was the lower blunt-headed summit which we had learned to detest under the name of Mont Avron. Noisy at intervals was wreathing itself in white smoke, which showed out in fine contrast against the blue horizon. As I watched it and the whole picture spread out before me in its loveliness, it was difficult indeed to realise that the foreground was full of fighting men, and that the smoke was the signal that a deadly missile had been sent hurtling through the air. But here comes something to remind one that smiles and peace are not synonymous. Carry him gently over the rough ground—ah! I fear from the look of him he will not long feel whether he is handled roughly or tenderly. That shell you heard explode in the foreground tore half his hip away as he stood leaning against the wall; he is quivering with incipient tetanus, and the blood is dripping on to the ground as it soaks through the canvas of the stretcher. How tenderly Colonel Dietrich speaks to the poor fellow. Ah, colonel, no wonder that you sigh and turn away at that faint reply to your question—"Landwehrmann, Herr Oberst." In that word "Landwehrmann," uttered by that poor bleeding soldier, is a volume of meaning. It means a widow and orphans, a shattered home, the breadwinner of a family struck down. There were gay lads standing about, brisk young regulars, and eighteen year old volunteers; but the shell spared them and whizzed straight on to the man who has mouths to fill. How one feels to hate war, as the *Krankenträger* carries the man out of our sight!

The whole regiment—the 103rd—is on the foreposts to watch the French, and there is a squeeze in the little huts which have been run up to shelter the men. Strange dog holes they are! The men are lying so close that it seems in places they are in layers among the straw. The

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officers have a separate place which is nearly as full as are the huts of the men. There is a stove, but it smokes; so does everybody in the place, and you cannot discern clearly the features of the man sitting opposite to you. Faintly it is apparent that he is eating sausage with a pocket knife. Yes, that is a tumblerful of neat rum which he is tendering you. It is so strong that it would bring the water to your eyes, only that the wood smoke has done so long ago. Somebody is asleep—at least vociferous snoring ought to be an indication of sleep. He must have tried very hard to sleep, else he could not have been successful in the din. But, then, remember that this regiment has been on this forepost duty without a break for three whole days, and your wonder will not be that one can sleep, but that the whole are not asleep.

Here comes the orderly with the welcome order that the relief is coming, and we shall get to dinner in Major von Schönberg's château. The good major is in great fettle. He has a wife in Saxonland, a lady for whom I have an intense respect, although I do not know her. I respect her for two reasons; first, because she is the major's wife; secondly, because she has had the thoughtfulness to send her husband—by the field post of course—a couple of barrels of Bairisch beer. These barrels are ever in the major's mind and on his tongue. He shouts, "Hurrah for the barrels!" when the orderly brings the tidings of the relief. While waiting for the relief I went with an officer into the batteries of siege guns, which had been surreptitiously preparing for days before with a single eye to the discomfiture of Mont Avron. The guns were already in their places,—fell tigers lurking in the jungle. Their ambush was complete. In front of the batteries stood intact a fringe of that close undergrowth which pervades everywhere the forest of Bondy,

intermingled with tall trees with bushy tops. There was a substantiality and trimness about the works that spoke of skill and method—the parapets solid and well defined, the covers for the supporting infantry elaborately finished, even to the dainty flattening of the slope of the banquette. The magazines were already about half full, but not a shot was to be fired till the complements should have been made up. No signs of exertion towards this result were visible in the broad sunlight; but had I waited by the batteries till twilight, I would have seen, coming slowly rumbling through the glades of the forest, long trains of carts driven by peasants escorted by cavalry, and each loaded up with ammunition-boxes. There was a quiet power about the whole scene which was very impressive.

The relief arrived, we returned to the château, and spent a delightful evening. The beer turned out perfection. There was a lack of beds in the château, which, however, as regarded myself was supplemented with characteristic Saxon courtesy. A captain gave up to me his bed, and slept himself on the straw on the floor. About four in the morning I was awakened by a shake on the shoulder. As, half awake, I looked up, there stood over me, looming very large, an Uhlan, with his throat wrapt up in many and preternaturally-complicated folds of comforter. He handed me a paper, and shoved a candle under my nose. What could the man mean? Was this an order for my immediate execution, or had that rich 93rd cousin died and left me his heir? I sleepily read over the paper, and found it was an order to turn out at once and march my company, with the rest of the brigade, to the neighbourhood of Sevran. Where was my company? Who had a right to order me—a free-born British Christian, and a neutral—thus

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peremptorily to turn out in so cold a morning? All at once I remembered I was in the captain's bed, and the sagacious idea occurred to me that the order must be intended for him. So it turned out, and the captain did the same. There was a general turn out in the early morning of the 23rd. The 2nd brigade of the 23rd division consists of the 102nd and 103rd Regiments, and there being, it seemed, symptoms that the restless French contemplated another attack on Le Bourget, this brigade was ordered to march to Sevran, to stand there in reserve in case they should be wanted. On we went, through the fiercely cold morning air—the breaths freezing into spangles on the beards, and little icicles forming on the tips of the moustaches. Everything seemed quiet. In Livry we met the Saxon Schützen Regiment going on to strengthen the Bondy foreposts. How well their black plumes looked in the gray light of the early morning. Livry save for them was empty. A couple of forlorn turkeys, ready plucked for Christmas, hung mournfully in a marketender's window. The customers had gone away, and might never come back. When the brigade reached the halting ground all was still quiet. There was nothing to be seen, and therefore I rode forward through Sevran and Aulnay. Between these villages the emplacements for the field guns were all appropriately occupied, and the gunners stood at their posts; no infantry was to be seen. But as soon as I cleared Aulnay and got up the gentle rise on the top of which runs the great Lille road, which passes through Le Bourget, it was apparent how thorough were the preparations. There were in position six or eight batteries of artillery all along the rear of the inundations, and on the slope rising behind Le Blanc Mesnil and Pont Iblon. Farther back stood other battalions in reserve. The great road itself was clear; I

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could see along it right into Le Bourget, a mile and a half to the front. But right and left of it stood the battalions of infantry, eleven of them, the whole of the 2nd division of the Guards. Here stood the pink and pride of the Prussian army—the Kaiser Franz, Kaiser Alexander, Königin Elizabeth, and Königin Augusta regiments. The Elizabeths had one battalion away out to the front there, holding Le Bourget, and have only two battalions on the ground here. The artillery consisted of that belonging to the 2nd division, and also of the artillery division of the Guard Army Corps. At the cross-roads, as I rode on, there met me a quaint little figure with a knot of officers behind him. His head seemed literally "in a bag," one could see nothing but a pair of keen eyes and a pair of white moustaches. Don't laugh at the funny-looking old man; you see before you a soldier than whom there is not a gallanter in all the German hosts; one who, though a general, ever lusts to be in the thick of the fray, fighting with his own good sword. The owner of the white moustache is General von Budritzki, the Commander of the 2nd Division of the Guards, the general with whom rested the dispositions of the day. He told me, as I halted for a gossip with his staff, that he *feared* there would be no fighting to-day. It was clear he was longing for a brush with the troops who gave him so much trouble on the 31st of October, when it fell to him to retake Le Bourget. That same Le Bourget—out to the front on the farther side of the inundation—seemed to stand strangely isolated. If the Queen Elizabeths occupying it were looking behind—a custom they were not addicted to—it must have had a tendency to make them nervous that there was nothing in the way of supports all the way back to Pont Iblon. But behind Pont Iblon there were supports enough in all

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conscience. Depend on it, the Elizabeths would stick to Le Bourget as long as they could, and if they had to fall back they would only entice the French forward into the half-burnt, half-shattered man-trap. A French occupation of Le Bourget, always temporary, simply meant so many French prisoners.

It was now one o'clock, and looking across towards Drancy, I could see no move on the part of the French, whose fires were smoking in front of Baubigny. Behind us, in Pont Iblon, there stood the Guards, waiting in the cold for whatever might turn up. It struck me, for my own part, that nothing would turn up, and that we should all go home to dinner. I knew Major von Schönberg was thinking of the beer again as he stood in that breezy meadow beside Sevran.

My anticipations of a quiet afternoon and a peaceable return to dinner were not realised. I was the solitary occupant of the officers' casino in Gonesse, when Aubervilliers fired a gun which seemed to be a signal, and a furious cannonade almost at once began. Le Bourget —poor battered Le Bourget—with my friends of the Queen Elizabeth Regiment, was again in receipt of all the punishment. Instead of returning to my post of the morning at Sevran, which was ineligible as a view point, I made for the high ground above Bonneuil, from which the whole scene lay spread before me like a map, in the clear afternoon air. In a long column, with its left resting on a clump of houses, a little in front of la Courneuve, right athwart the plain behind Drancy, and on as far as Baubigny—farther, perhaps, only I could not see it—stood the French infantry. There must have been 30,000 of them at least. On the left flank of the infantry, in front of la Courneuve, were two batteries of field artillery continually firing; there was another near the

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farm of Groslay, and at least two more in front of the village of Drancy itself. Then the forts were all hard at work from du Nord away in the north, the lunette of Stains, its covered way running across the inundation, de l'Est flashing out its discharges so close to the water's edge that the smoke might have been taken for jets of steam—Aubervilliers, the grey and grim, squatting there like a gigantic toad in the middle of the green plain—and Romainville on the farther brink of the canal; while the puff and curl of smoke which ever and anon hung round the lofty summit of Noisy, far away on the top of the ridge, and standing bluffly up against the horizon, told that again to-day Clichy was experiencing its tender mercies. But this was the only diversion; everything else concentrated itself doggedly on Le Bourget, if I except Mont Valérien, which away far to the right in the eye of the declining sun had also his mantle of white smoke about his shoulders, betokening annoyance to St. Cloud or Bougival. La Briche alone was quiet, lying there by the north bank of the Seine, looking as sulky as might be, as if out of temper at being debarred from joining in the mêlée. And a right boisterous mêlée it was, yet for the most part one-sided. The Guards' field artillery between Gonesse and Aulnay was profoundly silent; I suppose the French infantry were beyond range, and the forts, of course, yet more so. On the tract between Aulnay and Sevran the batteries of the 12th Army Corps were very brisk, firing steadily across into Drancy and the line toward Bondy, but making comparatively a poor show in comparison with the profuse fire of the French bursting out from so many points simultaneously. I was almost certain that I heard the crashing of the shells into Le Bourget; every moment I saw the flash and smoke of their explosion. With hardly an exception,

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every gun had the range well, and how it was possible for anything to live in the place passed my comprehension. But certain it is that there was in it von Altrock's battalion of the Queen Elizabeths, in the cellars it might be, or behind the thick walls, but there sure enough, as the French infantry would have found out had they ventured on the attack. Several times it seemed as if this was coming. Once three battalions threw themselves into as many columns—just to the right of la Courneuve, and made a start. I could see the officers out in the front. There was one man on a white horse —it might have been Ducrot himself—who was ubiquitous, now cantering right out beyond everything, now wheeling and halting, as if making a speech to encourage the advance. They came on very steadily for about a quarter of a mile, then they slowed, and finally halted. The officer on the white horse seemed to go frantic; he dashed hither and thither with desperate energy. Once or twice he rode right into one battalion, then came scouring round the rear, no doubt to stay the tailing off. But all was of no use. He could not get his fellows' steam up. A few shells came flying over Le Bourget and burst under their noses. There was one sharp bicker of musketry out from behind a barricade by Le Bourget railway station. That was von Altrock giving tongue, and when the Queen Elizabeths barked they also bit. The battalions went about, the white horseman bringing up the rear at a slow walk, as if marching to the funeral of his honour; and they blended again with the long fixed line. At a later hour I saw less distinctly another threatened assault from Drancy, but it made no head, and I could not distinguish its strength or character.

How brisk the French were everywhere behind this long line of theirs! The whole plain between la Cour-

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neuve and Baubigny was alive. I could distinctly see the red-cross flag flying on the ambulances as they stood by Maison des Ponceaux, in the southern rear of la Courneuve. The Soissons Railway line was extensively utilised. Half a dozen locomotives were puffing on it at once, each drawing a train of three or four carriages. When the train got to the end of its tether, about 500 yards beyond la Courneuve, it halted, and disembarked its freight—always soldiers. Reinforcements kept being drafted up till the very close—a circumstance auguring ill for peace the morrow. At the improvised railway terminus stood fast a locomotive, with a couple of carriages in front of it—no doubt those famous pieces of workmanship of Cail's, the cuirassed mitrailleuse waggons. They were, however, never called into action today. I never saw the locomotive move, but it had its steam up.

Riding along the front to the edge of the terrace of Montmorency, I came on the artillery officers stationed here, looking out on the scene through a huge telescope —a very powerful instrument. Bending it across to Montmartre, I could distinctly see the Parisians packed in dense masses on and around the top of the hill. Behind the round column of Solferino, now used as an observatory, there stood the largest group—men, women, and children. I wonder what they thought of the scene, such a contrast to scenes Parisians wot of which these once-quiet villages in the foreground had seen. By four o'clock the fire was burning out; only the embers still smouldered in the shape of a sullen gun from De l'Est or Aubervilliers. The smoke from our artillery away at Sevran was still banking up in large clouds, and we could just hear the sharp cracks of the field pieces. By five the forts had left off, and although the field batteries

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in front of la Courneuve brightened up again, it was but a momentary spurt—the usual "last word." Before I turned my horse's head towards Margency, the watch fires were burning up brightly in the crisp darkness of the frosty night, and all was quiet. My last view of Montmartre as I looked back going down the slope showed me the electric light flashing out from it across the plain in a great weird streak.

In describing, a few pages back, the manner in which the Germans had thrown up works across the naturally weak tract which lies on either side the Canal d'Ourcq, and northward to Gonesse, I expressed a conviction that they had made this section strong enough to turn any French force that might assail it. The events of the 21st and the 22nd December fully proved the correctness of the first anticipation, and inspired me with all the fuller confidence that any future effort must share the issue of those operations. Why, so far from carrying the "entrenched camp," the French had not been able to take and hold Le Bourget, its mere incidental advance post.

Yet another *dies iræ* was the 24th. The French seemed determined on fighting it out on this same Le Bourget line even to the bitter end. What the measurement of bitterness that end might represent it was impossible then to foretell; surely the intermediate stages must have been bitter enough for them, in bloody bivouacs, with the temperature twelve degrees below freezing point. I left them on the previous afternoon still standing in position there athwart the plain from la Courneuve to Bondy, with the setting sun on their backs, and Le Bourget the untaken in their front, the guns of the forts still hot from hurling the projectiles high over the heads of the immobile soldiery. The evening lapsed into the long hours, and the lull still continued, and one

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thought, for sure, the guns would at least be given a few hours to cool. But at midnight just as, after three rough and terrible nights, I was preparing to turn in between the luxury of a pair of sheets, the dreadful din commenced again. There was no roll of proviant columns or artillery tumbrils to deaden it—every bomb smote the ear as it were with a blow. Then, as the gunners warmed to their work, the separate and individual booms merged in a concatenation of hellish noise. I can sleep through most things; but I could not sleep through the fierce sound-clashing of this night, hard as I tried. There was nothing for it but to lie awake till one got nervous —and cannon fire produces inevitably this result in the strongest nerved—or to get up and go and watch the scene. Choosing the latter alternative, I soon found myself in the emplacement on front of Montmorency, where, in the cold, there stood a couple of artillery officers, watching the scene professionally. It was, indeed, a strikingly beautiful scene, if one could have eliminated from it its deadly nature. The night was so black that you almost fancied you could cut the solid darkness with a blow of your stick. From out the pitchiness there flashed the straight jets of fire, widening out like the mouth of a trumpet. Then away through the air went the projectile, recalling the memories of the old nursery alphabet, "C was a comet, with a fiery tail." Perhaps it burst in mid-air, as if it had brained itself on one of the rocks forming the foundation of heaven. Then the living fire flew in coruscations in all directions, the sparks gradually growing dull as the principle of specific gravity asserted itself. Or the bolt after its flight struck the ground, and striking burst, sending into the air an upward centrifugal illumination, as if it had stabbed the subterranean reservoir of a volcano. On the intermediate

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ground was the long serrated and irregular line of the French watch fires. We could see them one after another burn red and dull as the fuel got low, and then flash up with long-streaked tongues of flame as the watchers heaped on the wood. Hour after hour we gazed at the strangely weird scene, heedless that the bitter frost caught the breath on beards and moustaches, and matted them with ice tangles. There was a resistless fascination in the scene, under the spell of which one forgot even to smoke. But towards five o'clock, through the air troubled with the bellow of the firing, one could detect another sound—the rumble of artillery wheels in the rear. The Fourth Army Corps was contributing its quota to the resistance of the expected onslaught. Six batteries were on the road from Franconville to Gonesse, on the ground beyond which they would be in position before the darkness lifted. Then silent Montmorency burst out into life and candlelight. A brigade of the 7th Division was under orders to back up the sturdy Guardsmen, and the men of Anhalt-Dessau, the square-built soldiers of the Ludwig-Franz regiment —the 93rd of the North German line—were turning out of château and cabin, of desolated restaurant and apartments, no longer *meublés*, and heading for the front. Then it was time for me to go back to Margency, to get to horse; for the Crown Prince and his staff were bound for Gonesse before daybreak, and there were all the symptoms of a wild day's work.

The explanation of the persistence of the French in their efforts on this face was believed by the staff to lie in this—that they had received intelligence of the Army of the North having made some head, and that they were battling on ever in the expectation of hearing its answering cannon from the woods of Chantilly or the slopes of

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Dammartin. They did not know what we knew, how the day before Manteuffel, the grim, the curt, the astute diplomatist and able general, had sent Faidherbe reeling back with a facer, from which it would take him some time to recover. But who could help honouring them for their pertinacious endurance—that passive valour not reckoned an attribute of the French character in the traditional estimate? Just think, British reader, as you read this with feet in slippers in a cosy arm-chair, with a bright coal fire curling the edges of the boards of the volume, what it must have been to lie on the ground, badly clad, for three, aye four nights, with the glass several degrees below freezing-point! To do this at night, and to stand all day with faces to the foe! I protest I was filled with admiration, respect, and heartfelt compassion for the men whom I saw before me doing this —doing it too, it might be, on scanty rations, and without the spur and the backbone which the prestige of conquest ever gives. Those men out in the plain there must have been soldiers, and they must have had men to lead them who were worthy to command troops that could suffer privations so great. Not indeed soldiers in the highest sense of the word, since they manifested evident reluctance to come on to close quarters; but one knew not the circumstances under which they seemed to hang back, and if one had been among them he might have found their *élan* on a par with their endurance.

Gonesse was reached by eight o'clock, just as the sun rose. Again the Guardsmen of the 2nd Division were out waiting for the foe that never came, gallant old Budritzki impatiently pulling his white moustache as he stamped up and down the road. The whole line was "alarmed," that is, ready to turn out and fight in anything but alarm. On the further side were the Royal

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Saxons of the 12th Corps in reserve; on the hither side the Prussian-Province Saxons of the 4th Corps, also in reserve. The forts thundered continuously—hapless Le Bourget still their target. Major Kuene, of the Staff, had been in that village the day before, to know how it fared with its garrison of Guards, and he told me that in all his experience he had never seen anything to give him power to realize that such a rain of shells was possible. Yet the case of Le Bourget only bears out all previous experience regarding the comparatively little harm to life and limb which a shelling, however severe, causes to a place in which there are houses of tolerably strong construction. The Guards had sustained no great loss—less than they would have done in half an hour's skirmish in the open.

Hour after hour passed monotonously as we stood listening to the artillery fire. It would only have been wasting ammunition to attempt a reply with field guns; for the French infantry stood out of range, and concentrated their fire on Gonesse, considerably to our front; their artillery had no occasion to come so far forward as to give the Germans a chance of silencing it, while on the other hand had the latter been pushed forward, it would have to no purpose come within the range of the heavy metal of the forts. So there was nothing to do but stand watching the pounding of Le Bourget, and a terrible pounding that La Haye Sainte of our position got. But it became evident by one o'clock that the French contemplated no active forward movement, and the Crown Prince took the homeward road to Margency. The artillery and infantry of the 4th Army Corps followed him, leaving the Guards to the enjoyment of the Christmas-eve concert alone. In very deep bass that concert still continued long after the Ludwig-Franz men

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were cooking their Erbswurst in their billets in Montmorency. It was still making the air pulsate when I left the position there, as the shadows of the twilight were coming down. But there were signs that Christmas-day —the day sacred to associations of peace on earth and goodwill among men — was not to have its hallowed character desecrated by bloodshed. True, instead of the chimes of the bells that you heard in merry England, we might hear the hoarse-throated roar of the cannon from Du Nord and De l'Est. True, instead of wreaths of mistletoe, we might have wreaths of white smoke, beautiful, indeed, to look at against the clear blue sky, but the evil sign, nevertheless, of a terrible missile having been sent out into space; but there would to all appearance be no fighting. The French infantry, so far as I could judge, were breaking up their bivouacs, and falling back. The railway trains were brisk as ever in the afternoon, but they were, as it seemed, going out empty, and coming in full. Trochu was giving his poor fellows a chance to thaw—they must have been frozen stiff after so much exposure.

It was Christmas morning. Where shall we dine? I know where I should have liked to dine; but the obstinate Parisians came between one and "the old folks at home," and the young ones as well. I had no need to complain of want of Christmas invitations; it was in their very number that the bewilderment lay. I refrain from more than an allusion to one kind invitation from one who was ever kind. Then there was that genial one from compatriots in Versailles. Good old Dr. Tegener, of the Ecouen Hospital, had sent round another with a postscript to the note in the shape of the single word "Punch." Some merry lads in Epinay wished me to go down there, and be jovial under the shadow of La Briche;

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a battery of artillery would be glad of my company—at least they said so—at Napoléon-St.-Leu; a battalion of Würtembergers in Champs had half booked me more than a fortnight ago; and the list ended with the genial and cordial invitation of good Major von Schönberg, and his officers of the 2nd Battalion of the 103rd Saxon Regiment. It was the battalion's turn on Christmas night for duty on certain far outlying foreposts in front of the village of Raincy. The officers I knew to be right hearty fellows; then there was Frau Majorin's Bavarian Beer (per Feldpost). Yes, I said done and done again with the major. It was a long ride, with the temperature, too, below freezing point, and things over on the French side were not altogether tranquil, but the way I was going would bring me to the right spot, if that sluggish firing from the forts should warm up and cover a sortie; and there was something in all likelihood to be got by a gossip at the officers' casino in Gonesse. The latter anticipation was realized even better than usual.

Among the men of the Queen Elizabeth taken prisoners in Le Bourget on the 21st, was an ambulance assistant, whom the French had sent back the next day, in terms of the Geneva Convention, and, having been sent for by his captain to the casino, he gave me some interesting details of what he saw during his brief captivity. The prisoners were taken into St. Denis, and temporarily placed in a house with sentries over them. They were treated with the greatest humanity, amply supplied with coffee, sugar, wine, and bread. There was also given them abundance of flesh, but it was candidly owned that the meat was horseflesh. The French officers came among the Prussian prisoners, and asked them with great solicitude whether they had any cigars. An exchange was effected, the Germans giving cigars for cognac,

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of which there seemed to be great plenty. A party of ladies, dressed with the utmost elegance, came also to see the prisoners, and bound also, besides the gratification of their curiosity, on an acquisitive errand. "Had Messieurs les Prussiens any bacon in their knapsacks?" If so, the ladies would be glad to buy it of them. Only two fellows had any, and they gallantly made a present of it to the fair inquirers, who became very complimentary then as to the personal appearance of the captives. "What great, huge fine men these Prussians are to be sure," remarked one lady. "Yes, and just compare them with our little morsels of fellows," added another, pointing to the five feet nothing sentry who was on duty over the stalwart Guardsmen. Not unnaturally, as I think, the "little morsel" in question felt aggrieved at this observation, and his irritation took the form of turning the ladies out. My informant saw nothing of any privations during his sojourn in St. Denis; but then he was there only for a few hours, and owned his opportunities had not been great.

In the officers' casino there was sitting a dragoon officer who had come thither on an errand worth mentioning to English readers. His men, quartered in a village a considerable distance to the rear, had heard that there was in Gonesse a colporteur of the English Bible Society with his waggon, and they had asked the officer to come and ask the colporteur either to visit or to part with a few parcels of his tracts. I should have mentioned that on the road between Gonesse and Aulnay, on the morning of the 23rd, a road which two hours after was a very via dolorosa of exploding shells, I met this same colporteur coolly jogging forward with intent to distribute his wares among the battalions standing on the slope there waiting for the battle to com-

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mence. "It was a good time," according to the expressed views of this simple, brave Christian man, "for the men to read good words when they were standing there with nothing to do, and with the shadow of death hanging over them." There are few who will disagree with him, but there are not many who would have proceeded so practically to give effect to his convictions. I regret much that I lost the card on which I had written down the name of this brave colporteur, but he came from Carlsruhe, he told me.

Here is a story of valour of another kind, but not of a higher character. In the 1st battalion of the Queen Elizabeths there was a boy-lieutenant, with a swarthy face and bright black eyes, whose name was von Schramm. When I knew him he could not have been more than eighteen: had he been an English lad, he would have been at Eton. A German lad, he had done with the schools, passed his examinations, got his commission, won the iron cross, and was the adjutant of his battalion. When Major von Altrock (Le Bourget, if it had made bullet holes in his mantle, had brought him, too, a step in rank)—when Major von Altrock led his battalion into Le Bourget, on the 20th, little von Schramm was left behind sick in Aulnay. The gun fire on the 21st knocked the sickness out of him; his regiment was fighting, and he not there. He jumped on his horse, crossed the inundation at Le Blanc Mesnil, and rode into Le Bourget athwart the artillery fire from Drancy. The Queen Elizabeths, however, were already driven far down the street; and he, striking the village street half way up, found himself in the crowd of the Frenchmen. To leap from his horse and dash into a house was the work of an instant—if he could get out at the back door he might yet escape. But there was no back door—the pursuers were

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hot on his heels, and von Schramm was a prisoner. His captors asked him for his parole, but he refused to give it, and they proceeded to conduct him towards St. Denis —a convoy of two officers and two men. In going through the park of Le Bourget, a beautiful spot in which there is a lake and many thickets, the musketry fire from the retreating guardsmen came very close and fast. The officer who carried von Schramm's sword was shot, and fell. Von Schramm made a dash at his own sword, got his hand inside the hilt, cut down the other officer, took to the water like a duck, dodged the bullets of the soldiers as he swam across, and finally joined his regiment after all—rather damp it is true, as a man will be who takes to swimming with his clothes on, but extremely jolly. And the best of it was that the ducking cured his sickness. At least one was entitled, I think, to say so after having seen him demolish a massive dinner and two bottles of beer.

It is a long weary stretch from Gonesse to Aulnay. There is no intervening village, and not a single house by the wayside. It was a curious proof of that masterly consciousness of ability to concentrate, and absence of fussy demonstration on the part of the Germans, that not a single soldier nor a single gun was visible on this expanse on which the day before there had stood an army. The men were in the villages on the alert, it is true, and ready for action at a moment's notice; but they were not needlessly brought from under cover.

I arrive at the château in Clichy, and put up my horse there, going out to the advanced foreposts before the day fades. As I reach the garden opening into the forest, a discouraging sight meets the eye. Four soldiers are carrying on their shoulders a motionless form, lying on a stretcher and covered with a bloody blanket. "Wounded?"

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The solemn "Dead" comes from the mouth of the accompanying under-officer. It is a corpse they are carrying up into the village. This was Private Jeskow's last Christmas morning. He was making his coffee in a house behind outpost Nr. 8, when a shell burst under the window. His sergeant told him he was in dangerous quarters, but the coffee was near the boil. Before it boiled, another shell had come and burst in the room; a fragment struck Jeskow in the back, and killed him.

Forward down a slope through a solitary wood of dense underwood, mingled with goodly trees. On the pathway are numerous craters of shells. There is a little rise, and then I emerge on to a belt of heathy clearing in the wood. Everywhere the wood has been full of barricades, of *chevaux de frise* of all kinds of appliances for arresting an enemy. On this cleared belt are works of greater pretension—parallels, entrenchments, strong stockades, trenches, enfiladed approaches, and what not. A few soldiers were visible about it. There are more among the huts to the right. What a glorious sky is that which lies over the faint gossamer-like smoke of Paris. The sun is going down, not in human blood this Christmas afternoon, but in blood-like hues of his own creation. All the firmament is rippled in crimson wavelets, and the light comes ruddy on the earth as if it fell through stained-glass windows. Five minutes brings one across the clearing into more scrub, and then into a village of châteaux nestling in the scrub. Forest, clearance, and village all reminded me very much of the neighbourhood of Chislehurst in Kent. There is the same ruggedness, and still the same appearance of vicinity to the metropolis in the physical aspect of the scene. On the cross-roads, in the centre of this collection of villages, I meet the officers in command of the two battalions waiting

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to be relieved. The men are massed behind the walls. They are sauntering up and down on the exposed road. Any news? None. Perhaps a little. At ten o'clock this morning two French brigades had deployed in parade order before Bondy in two long lines. Then it seemed as if the troops marched past a general and formed a hollow square, in which they stood for nearly an hour, after which one brigade went back to quarters, while the other marched on to the foreposts. It was conjectured that a religious service was being performed while the troops stood there in hollow square. If so, Du Nord and De l'Est furnished the responses, for they were firing at that hour. About the same hour three brigades were visible, marching in the front of Aubervilliers, and the Observatory officer reported that he had seen two naval batteries arrive by train at Bondy, and immediately push forward, as if to take up position. This would seem to argue that there were to be heavy batteries so near as Bondy, which must, it seemed, in the event of their not being shut up by our still, grim, silent friends that sulked behind the parapets in our rear, have the inevitable result of widening the circle of our forepost environment.

Tramp, tramp, tramp, here comes the 103rd. There is the major in front talking earnestly with the field-officer he is going to relieve. Here comes Hammerstein, unrecognisable by reason of wraps, and only to be discerned and greeted by his voice. He has got on a pair of fur boots, that seem a legacy from an Esquimaux, and here is his big brother-in-law, Kirchbach, and von Zanthier, and the whole lot of them. Now comes the relieving of the foreposts—a ticklish duty, for the relief must be in full possession before the relieved dare to come out. As each company goes on to its post, it is met by a trusty non-commissioned officer of the depart-

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ing outpost, who acts as its cicerone. Then the sergeant and the lieutenant go out and change the sentries, and, with a cheery "Good night," off stumps the "old guard." Glad enough to go, beyond doubt. The duty here just now is one night on, one night off; but when, as has occurred for the last three days, the day and night "off" are spent standing on the alert, there is not much relaxation. Two battalions, instead of one, are now detailed for the outposts, owing to the necessity for dry-nursing in this way the babes in the wood, who have not yet begun to squall; and this makes the duty all the harder.

The relieving duty over, we reach our home for the night out beyond the villas. Let me describe it. It is a long, low wooden hut, such as you may see squatters and gipsies occupying on the debateable ground between Peckham, Lewisham, and Nunhead Cemetery. Its loftiest part is about six feet high, the roof sloping till, at the back, the height is about four feet. The erection is wholly of wood—chiefly, as it appears, of château doors. There is one window in the place; it is sashed and tastefully curtained. There is a wooden floor. One—the lower-roofed side of the room—is lined with spring mattresses, that have evidently also come out of the châteaux. On the walls are pictures—aye, and mirrors—to be ascribed to the same origin; and between the window and the beds is a range of good massive mahogany tables, that were not made by the pioneers. The chairs are a study. They are here of all styles. The fauteuil, the ottoman, the American rocking-chair, the high straight-backed Elizabethan, the Louis Quatorze settee, and the humble wicker-bottom. There is a pleasant fire burning in the little stove, and you cannot well imagine how cheerful, with the bright lamp burning and the sparkle of the fire, the little nest looked—if you could only forget that the

French were not 1000 yards off, and that you were in so ludicrously easy range of their guns.

But we did forget these facts somehow. The quarters were those of a Hauptmann, he in whose charge was the uttermost forepost. But by common consent the officers from the other positions further back—the *repli*, where the major had his post, and the captains from the right and left rear, came dropping in to eat their Christmas dinner with the English guest and comrade. The kitchen was a part of the hut partitioned off, and we had the battalion cook there—a resplendent being in a white cap and apron. Before dinner he entered in state and lit the candles on the Christmas tree, a goodly sprout, from every bough of which dangled cakes and comfits. The cloth—we had a cloth, never mind about its colour—was laid, the plates and wine were warmed, and we drew around the social board. I am in a position to present the reader with the Christmas menu of the 2nd battalion of the 103rd Regiment on the foreposts: Soup—Liebig's extract. Fish—sardines, caviare. Entrées—goose sausage, ham sausage, a variety of undistinguishable sausage. Pièces de résistance—boiled beef and maccaroni, roast mutton, and potato-salad. Divertissements—Schinken, compot of pears, ditto of apples, preserved sour-krout. Cheese, fresh butter, fruit, nuts, biscuits, tarts, &c. The potables were as follows:—One barrel of Frau Majorin's beer still to the good, the other a dead marine; very good red wine, champagne iced—a little too much in fact. The caterer had stuck the bottles outside on his first arrival, and it seemed as if the wine had frozen in a solid mass. When it came to be poured out, it would not run. A proposition was made that the bottles should be broken, a hatchet fetched, and a portion of champagne-ice be served out to each person; but an officer of an

inquiring turn of mind, who had been pricking the ice on the surface of one bottle with a skewer, found that it was only about half an inch thick, and that below there lay a limpid pint of liquid champagne. We pricked all the bottles with the skewer, and got on beautifully.

After dinner there were but two toasts. One was "The King of Saxony;" the other "Frau Majorin von Schönberg." Both were drunk with enthusiasm; the latter—in her beer—with positive effusion. Then we got to song-singing. A Degenfähnrich came to the front in this line—the young Baron von Zehmen. Instrumental accompaniments were forbidden on account of the proximity of the enemy, but the choruses were loud enough to raise the dead, let alone the Frenchmen. Let me give a list of a few of the songs; they deserve popularity in England.

"Stehe ich in finsterer Mitternacht."
(Standing in the dark night.)

"Wer will unter die Soldaten?"
(Who'll be a soldier?)

The beautiful and plaintive

"I hatte einen Cameraden
Einen besseren findest du nicht."

(I had a comrade,
A better one ne'er you'd find.)

I seem to have a hazy notion that somebody tried "Bonny Dundee," and failed ignominiously.

About ten o'clock a deserter was brought in—a decidedly unfavourable specimen of the French line. He was very dirty, and he had no buttons anywhere—rather a common want I have noticed with French soldiers. He said he was hungry and thirsty. The major gave him something to eat and the run of a bottle of brandy, while we listened to the rascal's lies. When he had finished

his rigmarole, which consisted of all sorts of canards, it was too late discovered that he was as drunk as David's sow. He insisted on singing the Marseillaise, and when that was done, roared "*A bas les Prussiens!*" What was to be done with the wretch? If he were turned out of doors he would go to sleep in the ditch, and freeze so hard before morning that you could chip pieces off him. Ultimately he was relegated to the stable by the *repli*, where stood the battalion horses, and was borne away shoulder high, roaring *Vive la république!*

Enter Under-officer Schultz, wooden as ever, a little woodener perhaps on account of the hard frost. Under-officer Schultz came to read the orders. Ordinarily he would have read them dry and gone away dry, but this was Christmas time, and kindliness prompted the wetting of Under-officer Schultz's throat. "Champagne, red wine, or cognac, Schultz?" "Cognac, Herr Hauptmann," came woodenly from the lips of Schultz. Schultz bolted a big glass of cognac, and then read the orders. I think the cognac gave him unction to roll out sonorously the sentences of King Wilhelm's address to his troops, which was in the orders for the night. Then he went about with a wooden click of his heels, and disappeared.

Continually there was a circulation of officers as we sat by the board in the wooden house. The major and myself were the only sedentaries. Duty called, and men obeyed it. About midnight Hauptmann von Zanthier rose and buckled on his sword. He was going round with the patrol; would I go with him? Certainly. There were the officer, three men, and myself. Out we went into the brushwood beyond any of our posts. There were the French outposts—not 500 yards off. We could see the fires lit by the watches. Could a neutral go across and have a chat with them? Well, not exactly; there were

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two or three obstacles. Here is a noise in the brushwood; somebody is coming down the path; there are three men. A voice says, "*Venez, Messieurs!*" It is a French patrol, and the officer thinks our patrol is French too. Von Zanthier and his men accept the invitation. I stand fast. Presently he comes back with three prisoners —a Mobile officer and two men. The officer is a thorough gentleman. On our way back to the Feldwacht he has an immense deal to say, *de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis.* When we get back we find that that wonderful man in the white cap has made egg-flip for us. The Mobile officer joins us heartily in a caulker, and does not need to be pressed to take a little supper. He is a jewel of a man. He tells me he once had a moor in Scotland. He laughs at the notion of Paris capitulating. The Mobiles alone are capable of averting that fate. They certainly are not very brilliant specimens, the two he has met with; but then, as he says, "they were selected promiscuously." More egg-flip, and then the spring mattresses.

The bombardment of Mont Avron—that event which had for days past formed the chief topic of discussion and for anticipation—commenced on the morning of the 27th of December. For many nights before, indeed ever since the change of policy which I noted as having taken place immediately after the great sortie at Champigny and Villiers, the woods which covered the German advanced positions before Montfermeil and Clichy had been full of life. First, working parties toiled in the dark, or by moonlight; then came the heavy roll of the siege artillery, and of the tumbrels weighted with the heavy ammunition. About half the guns arrived direct by the Soissons Railway to the last available station on the fore-posts, and were almost immediately placed in position on the batteries. The rest came *viâ* Lagny, and were des-

tined for the more southerly batteries. Most of the guns were from Spandau, and had already done more or less service in the sieges of Strassburg, Toul, La Fère, and Soissons. The batteries began on the south on the further side of the Marne in close proximity to Noisy-le-Grand. There was a gap across the valley of Chelles, but they began again in front where the height of Montfermeil juts out into the plain, and continued at intervals with a slight sweep, of which the convexity was toward Avron, further to the north than, and in front of, the village of Raincy. There were in all thirteen batteries, but only 76 instead of 78 guns, one of the batteries at Maison Guyot, before Montfermeil, being two guns short of its complement. Batteries, Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4 (24 guns in all), were in front of Raincy; batteries, Nos. 5, 6, 7, and 8 (22 guns in all), were at Maison Guyot, above Gagny, and in front of Montfermeil; batteries, 9, and 10 (12 guns), were above the bridge at Cournay on the south side; and batteries, 11, 12, 13 (18 guns), were on the low bluffs, at Noisy-le-Grand. Ten of the batteries consisted of Krupp's steel 24-pounders; the other three were armed with 12-pounder rifled cannon, adapted from smooth bores. As must be almost universally known by this time, the poundage of the German guns refers only to round shot, not a single specimen of which I saw round Paris. All the guns threw shells of a weight more than double their nominal capacity, the relative proportion being, I believe, as 6 to 14. Thus, the piece known as a 24-pounder threw a shell of about 56 pounds weight. I do not trouble the reader with the fractional figures, involved in a calculation allowing for the trivial difference between the German and the English pound. The French on their part had been working hard on and around Avron ever since the 2nd: indeed before it. It was understood

that in all, standing opposite the German batteries, and in a position to reply to them, there were about 60 cannon, exclusive, of course, of those on the forts. These were chiefly, if not altogether, naval guns, of recent construction and considerable calibre—say 64-pounders. A few were heavier. The German batteries had, according to this computation, a numerical advantage, with the advantage of greater precision—a notable feature of German artillery *in se*, and backed by special shooting accuracy on the part of the siege gunners, who were not drawn from the field artillery, but had been specially imported from the fortresses, and were thoroughly conversant with the handling of those huge arms of precision. The design and construction of the batteries for the reception of the guns had been the work of Colonel Bartsch, the famous artillery officer who had already proved his skill in not a few of the earlier sieges of the war, Colonel Oppermann, Chief of the Engineer Staff of the Maas Army, and Colonel Himpe, Chief of the Artillery Staff; and I am satisfied that the most experienced judges, if conversant with the positions, would admit that all that skill and knowledge, both practical and theoretical, could effect, had been bestowed on the duty.

If the French had ears to hear, it was simply bewildering that they should have remained ignorant of the fact, that something exceptional must have been going on for nights before behind the sheltering fringe of trees. We know that they were so, so blind and deaf were they in their reckless confidence; but at the time this seemed so incredible that some of us had the fanciful notion that they knew all about it, and, like a boxer who disdains to hit his antagonist till he has "peeled," that they refrained from disturbing the operation. Night after night the electric light flashed across where the working parties

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were working; as its rays went dancing round the line of environment, like a grotesque gigantic will of the wisp, the spademen held their hands, the raised pick fell not, the tumbrils halted as if the flash had been a ray from the eye of the Gorgon; but the precautions, although wise, were probably superfluous. What is the use of light, if there are not eyes to use it? Will thistles yield grapes? No lime-light, or electric flash, or other fancy expedient that ever was invented, is to be named in the same week with the good to be achieved by a system of linx-eyed piquets and patrols, and by small reconnaissances, pushed home with a daring that would be reckless but for their skill and tact. The extraordinary fact stands that it was not till the night which preceded the commencement of the bombardment that the French batteries seemed to awake to the position. All night long the Saxon pioneers were hard at work with their keen axes cutting down, ungratefully but necessarily, the friendly trees which had sheltered their previous labours. It is the way of the world—to the devil with a friend when you have no further need for him. Among the Saxon woodmen who did not spare those trees came not a few shells during the night, not only to their discomfort, but to that of the battalions who, ever since the guns had been placed in position, were sent on to the foreposts nightly to double the usual guards for the protection of the big toys in the front.

It was originally intended that the firing should begin at seven o'clock. Half an hour before I was out on the plateau of Raincy, midway between the batteries in the park of Raincy and those at the Maison Guyot, listening in the cold morning air for the first booming report, the emblem and herald, as it would be, of a new phase of the war, and, as we hoped, of a cogent argument towards

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its early termination. Seven passed, and all was still silent—for the French had left off their firing. Eight came, and the keenness of expectancy became absolutely painful. Was the whole thing after all a snare and a feint? Were these "quakers," whose cold sides I had leaned against a few days before, and were the ammunition cases in the magazines so many "dummies"? No; the evidences of one's senses contradicted this. Was, then, the day postponed yet once again? No, only the hour. At exactly half-past eight the first gun crashed its report below me from the Maison Guyot battery, and I could hear its angry whiz as it cut the air in crossing the intervening space. In three minutes more the air was full of a din of deep diapason. There was nothing to see, and I saw it—such may serve as a summary of my morning's work. At daylight the snow had begun to fall—not heavily and in big flakes, but in feathery particles, which filled and whitened the air, making obstacles invisible a quarter of a mile off. Of course the gunners had got their sights and ranges the day before, and their shot must have been "there or thereabouts," but Avron was as invisible as if it had been on the further side of the North Pole. The work gave one the idea of fighting with knives in a dark room. At first it seemed as if the French artillerymen were taken by surprise. It was not till nine o'clock that Avron sent back the first instalment of its reply. When it did begin, though, it went to work with a will, but rather wildly, the shells flying about promiscuously in a fashion that impaired the safety of any given point. By ten, this duel in the dark was in full sway, the air incessantly lacerated and tortured by the whistle of the projectiles, so that one might have imagined himself in a calm at sea, with the rush of a coming squall bearing down upon him. The German

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fire was like clock-work; the French fire came more in spurts and gusts, and then was silent for some half a minute. When in full blaze, it was so rapid as to be continuous, and not admit of being timed itself, or of one timing the German fire. About eleven the batteries at Bondy—as well as I could judge by the direction of the sound—took up their parable, and were replied to by the extreme right flank of the German position, which had been designed amiably looking toward the said Bondy, with a view to such a demonstration. All day long the fire continued, with no great variation to speak of. Perhaps it was heaviest from twelve till two. After that hour the French fire seemed to slacken visibly. There were longer intervals between the spurts, and the spurts were not so animated. The forts of Rosny, Nogent, and Noisy, however, chimed in occasionally, covering the slackness of Avron's efforts. About sundown there was a marked weakness in the enemy's fire, the German fire continuing meanwhile in a steady, slogging, stolid fashion. By nine o'clock at night both sides had partially suspended operations.

The regulation night-fire from the German batteries was one shot per hour from each gun. All day long the troops on the eastern side stood in quarters, ready for anything that might turn up, and some batteries of guard field artillery were actually out in the cold behind Pont Iblon, but there was no hostile demonstration. At an early hour in the morning Prince George of Saxony went to Chelles, with the design of witnessing the commencement of the bombardment, but the snow in the air hid everything, and hearing was the only sense called into requisition.

The firing continued sluggishly during the night of the 27th, and on the morning of the 28th the French ability

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to reply, measured, at all events, by their reply, was so feeble as to admit of a considerable further relaxation on the part of the Germans. During the day their firing was continued at the rate of about five to eight shots per minute, chiefly from the guns on the right-hand batteries in front of Raincy. Those batteries had been, in the words of Mr. Swiveller, a "staggerer" to Mont Avron. The French batteries on that commanding position, although it is true that they looked all three ways, were not quite impartial, and they had been constructed so that the most dangerous direction of their gaze was towards the valley of the Marne. Thus they could cope face to face with our batteries at Noisy-le-Grand, they could sweep the "horseshoe," they could pound into Chelles, till a man was thankful when he was out of it, and they could send their missiles into Montfermeil; but on the country further north than Raincy fewer and less powerful guns were trained, and consequently our batteries further north, in front of Raincy, actually enfiladed the batteries and parallels of Mont Avron, throwing in a flanking fire, against which, when the north-eastern battery was silenced, neither retaliation nor defence was possible. Of course a short time would have remedied this defect; even in frosty weather, a battery can nearly as soon alter its face as can a hypocrite his; but just as the mask fails the hypocrite in extremis, so it becomes impossible for the battery to change its front in the teeth of a heavy and unremitting fire. This circumstance accounts for the collapse of the Avron batteries earlier than any of us in the German lines had allowed ourselves to anticipate. There could be no question as to the collapse; so early as the afternoon of the 28th the fire from Avron was all but extinguished, and the four battalions of French infantry which were supporting the gunners

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when the firing began on the previous morning were believed to have fallen back off the table-land with considerable loss. Our casualties from the fire of the 27th were twenty-three killed and wounded. I was surprised that it should have been so heavy, spite of the unquestionably heavy fire, looking at the strength and height of the protecting parapets, and the short range, which gave little scope to a plunging fire.

The easy and speedy silencing of Mont Avron sent a shock of surprise—I can find no other expression—through the Maas army. Men themselves who, the moment they took up a position, set about strengthening it to the utmost of time and power, if they were to evacuate it but next morning, the Germans could not realise how a mass of persons calling themselves soldiers should not, during an occupation lasting for a month, deal so with a position like Avron as to make it something else than a mere noisy blustering bully—awkward till somebody tackles him, but doubling up with ludicrous promptitude as soon as a good man stands up to him. The pessimists shook their heads, and hinted at a ruse to draw on an assaulting party; sanguine men, on the other hand, spoke of seeing on the afternoon of the morrow the Krupps from Raincy in position on Avron, and hammering away at Rosny, Nogent, and Noisy.

Other results had been attained by the two days' work besides the silencing of Mont Avron. The German batteries did not all face that eminence. They "set to partners," with a view to other contingencies than the mere silencing of Mont Avron. The 22-gun battery farthest to the right had two fronts. Its left portion looked to Avron; then, by the formation of a very obtuse agle, its right flank was thrown back and faced, across the level, on Bondy and Baubigny. This arrangement

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was devised to admit of the engaging of the French batteries in front of Bondy. There had been a feeble fire from that quarter on both the 27th and 28th, but of a character calculated to give the impression that the batteries which had been believed to be there were elsewhere. The French, although the large force of four divisions, if not more, which they maintained on the Bondy-Baubigny-Courneuve line for three days—commencing with the 21st Dec., had partially dispersed and fallen back, still maintained, it was believed, quite a division, with its right on Bondy, and its left retired on the railway station at Baubigny. The camp occupied by this body had been broken up, no doubt in consequence of the fire directed toward the positions named. That same railway station at Baubigny (on the Strassburg line) was of immense utility to the French in many obvious ways. If the German fire of the two days had not convinced the French of the inadvisability of using the line so far for the future, the fact of its being commanded by the Raincy batteries could not fail to be of incalculable importance to the Germans in the event of any renewal of the French attempt to break out or extend their ground in the Le Bourget direction. There were indications that the idea of efforts in that direction had not wholly been abandoned. They had constructed—I don't know, indeed, that they were ever finished—no fewer than six batteries at intervals across the plain between la Courneuve and Drancy, pretty much on the line on which I described their infantry as standing on the afternoon of the 23rd. These could only have been intended to support an attack on Le Bourget by dealing more formidably than could field artillery either without emplacements or in emplacements hastily thrown up, with the German artillery, that was ready at a moment's notice

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to take up the Pont Iblon-Aulnay-Sevran line behind the inundations—that position which I have ventured to describe as virtually an entrenched camp. It was on this line that the German artillery had stood on the 21st, and where, although unable to prevent the partial storm of Le Bourget by the French, it had paralysed their succeeding efforts, and covered effectually the successful effort of the Guards for its recapture. That we should, therefore, have had warm work again in that quarter before the end, I have little doubt, but for the arguments of the siege-gun batteries between Aulnay and Dugny; the sites which had already been pegged out before Avron had been evacuated.

That event had, in my judgment at the time, this important effect, it made an *Ausfall* of any other proportions than a demonstration, and occurring anywhere between Chennevieres and St. Germains, not, indeed, as an utter impossibility physically, but as being impossible in a military sense, because certain, on the face of things, to be utterly disastrous in its results. The nullification of Avron as hostile, supplied the wanting link in the impregnability of the German cordon. But this condition, valuable as it was, was but passively useful in contributing to the end for which the German army stood round Paris. In the recognition of the fact by men craving at once for victory, for peace, and home, the anxiety for a general bombardment as appearing to tend toward the accelerated realisation of their ardent aspirations, became very intense.

Before the bombardment began I expressed my doubts whether the Germans would be able to do any great things by a systematic bombardment of the forts, and the forts alone. Remember how many days of bombardment it cost us, and what pyramids of projectiles we threw

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before we rendered the Malakoff untenable. And we were close to the sea-board; yet, nevertheless, we had to pause again and again for supplies of ammunition. Every projectile thrown by the Germans represented arduous and long-continued toil to bring it to the cannon's mouth. They had to lay their account with the certainty that the Parisians would strain every nerve to return the fire and to repair the damage it causes. It would then appear, as it seemed to me, that to operate against the forts successfully would require both a stronger artillery, whether in calibre or in number, than that possessed by the French, and a large and continuous supply of ammunition. But a comparatively small array of artillery—of such weapons of precision as the German artillery consists of, and with the dexterous German artillerymen, would suffice, as it seemed, to keep the guns of the forts in play, so that they could divert none of their attention; while a few guns of longer range were meanwhile negativing the forts altogether, and pounding directly into Paris. The adoption of this expedient, supposing it successful, had the obvious advantage that it would save the carriage of the vast quantities of ammunition which a lengthened bombardment of the forts would necessitate. I readily and cheerfully own that in believing that a very short duration of such home-practice would suffice to end the siege, I did injustice to the enduring fortitude of the Parisians; but there were no precedents, and I think that if what we knew of the Parisians led us to misjudge them, what they must have known of themselves must have surprised them with a greater surprise than even outsiders felt—that heroism should be extant in Paris in 1870-71. And, further, I do not think that anyone who was in Paris in the early days of the armistice, could fail to gather that the shells which had fallen into Paris had an appreciable effect in

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hastening the end which was otherwise inevitable. I do not say that the bursting of shells in the street daunted the Parisians, but it produced a vague, uneasy nervousness, the revulsion from which had not yet taken place when I got inside, and aided the logical perception of the fact that further resistance was utter madness as, in a few days, it would have been impossible from famine.

But to return to Mont Avron, definitely shut up by the German batteries on the afternoon of the 28th December. It was "dead," in the expressive German phrase. For the first time for several weeks its slopes were cautiously traversed by German patrols, who saw or heard nothing indicative of life, and the conviction gained ground in the morning that men and guns had alike cleared off it. Perhaps it was just as well, both for the men and guns, for it consists with my information that certain Saxon infantrymen had been looking to the contents of their ammunition pouches and the setting of their bayonets, and that certain artillerymen had been handling long nails, which a not very vivid imagination might conjecture were intended for spiking purposes.

One or two slender day-patrols had in the course of the afternoon of the 29th groped their way up the sides of Mont Avron, and brought back word that, so far as they could discern, there were no Frenchmen in the vicinity. But the night had fallen, and the young moon had risen, before Hauptmann von Zanthier, of the 2nd battalion of the 103rd Regiment, stepped out on to the platform of the Raincy-Villemomble station, where his company had its outpost quarters for the night, and summoned to turn out the first four corporalschafts. Out tumbled the sturdy fellows, shaking off them the straw, as hens do the loose feathers, and falling into their places with that rapid, silent method that speaks of real

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discipline. When the sergeant reported "all right," the little band, eighty in number, marched off the platform, and took its steady way through the scattered village of Villemomble. Outside it we came—for I was an unattached companion of the gallant Hauptmann—on detached châteaux, standing in their grounds on the plain —residences that had been beautiful once, but which were now ghastly in their utter ruin. Straight on went the road, till one began to feel the gradual rise. We were on the slope of Avron. Then it bent to the left, for the hill was too steep for the road to climb direct, and in the bend we came among the trees and brush, out of the middle of which were dug clearings, on which châteaux stood, looking out over the plain to the north-east. About half-way up the ascent we came on the line of French piquet-posts. The French had certainly been very fond of Avron. What between barricades, entrenchments, rifle-pits, and loopholed houses, many a stout Teuton would have gone down before that position could have been forcibly carried over which we passed so peaceably in the silent moonlight. Working always round to the left, we reached the crest of the hill on that face of the plateau which looks out on Montfermeil, and where the summit was marked by the largest batteries. Once inside them, there met our eyes one of the weirdest scenes that imagination could conjure up. Ground ploughed with shells, embrasures stove in, parallels all but obliterated, and yet seemingly not a single cannon left behind. But if the French had removed their cannon, they had left their dead. One slid and stumbled over a little ice puddle. The ice blushed up red in his face —it was frozen human blood. Behind the batteries and inside the breastworks the dead lay thick. Dead! No man who long followed this war but must have become

so familiar with the aspect of slain men, that the original thrill and turn of the blood at the sight had faded into a memory of the past, at which he all but smiled when it dimly recurred to him; but the terrible ghastliness of those dead transcended anything I had ever seen, or even dreamt of, in the shuddering nightmare after my first battle-field. Remember how they had been slain. Not with the nimble bullet of the needle-gun, that drills a minute hole through a man and leaves him undisfigured, unless it has chanced to strike his face; not with the trenchant sabre-cut of the dragoon, not with the sharp stab of the bayonet, but slaughtered with missiles of terrible weight, shattered into fragments by explosions of many pounds of powder, mangled and torn by massive fragments of iron. There lay behind one of the embrasures a form utterly headless. I suppose the shell had struck the hapless being full in the face, and carried head and throat before it in its fierce rush. The guillotine could not have performed the operation more cleanly.

But what need to dwell in detail on such a topic? Let it suffice that there lay the unburied and abandoned dead among the snow stained with their blood, and with the depressions in those ghastly faces turned up to the calm moonlight, drifted up by the snowflakes which had fallen since they had been shot down. When would they be buried? When would those wan faces cease to look up into the eyes of the moon, in silent but eloquent protestation against the institution called war? When would the stray human fragments over which one stumbled as he went be gathered together, and their ghastliness be hidden beneath friendly earth? Not yet. Men will not dig graves in war time as if they were blasting tunnels, and the earth was as hard as the bowels of

Mont Cenis. The corpses on Mont Avron had to lie there till the thaw came. That gruesome group in the camp here who had been sitting round the fire when the shells came and burst in it, and blew one and all of them into the other world, had to remain as it was—a horrible mockery of conviviality, for a time at least. To look at the group from a little distance, one would conclude that its members, lying or seated in a circle, were hobnobbing genially round a common pot, or eating out of one dish. Come nearer, and look inside that ring of squatting men, or what once were men. I care not how inured you are to sights of horror, you will turn away sick and scared from that circle of carnage. Great God! that man should be able so to mangle his fellow-man made in thine image!

Behind the batteries, besides the relics I have alluded to, were found many evidences of the precipitation with which the French had evacuated the position. There were lots of wine—we drank some of it standing there among the dead—and piles of loaves—which the Saxon soldiers skewered on their bayonets. There were blankets, too, and military saddles, one of which, an officer's, Hauptmann von Zanthier philosophically annexed. Both in and about the camp lying farther back there was a considerable quantity of rice, and also many blankets, shoes, and soldiers' knapsacks. Lumps of horse-flesh lay about or hung on cross-sticks. Investigations amongst the tents and mud huts brought to light bottles of rum and bags of peas. The ground was strewn with chassepots, and behind the batteries, as well as in the battery magazines, were gunpowder bags containing each a charge, and many projectiles. The camp, and indeed the whole of the plateau, bore numerous traces of lengthened occupation. The French are the beastliest

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campers in the world, and they seemed to have been exceptionally beastly in Mont Avron. Behind the camp lay the little straggling village of Avron, still smoking from the fire that had raged in it during the morning; whether kindled by a German shell or by the last Frenchman I do not know. There was not a sign of life on all the plateau, except a lurching cur who gnawed something under a waggon; what it was I did not care to investigate too closely. The greater part of the plateau had been occupied with vineyards, which were now, of course, trodden down and ruined. Stumbling through the stumps of the vines, I crossed the plateau, and looked down over its farther verge. Below me lay the village of Rosny, easily to be distinguished by its lights. Above it was the horizon line, with Forts Rosny and Noisy standing up against the sky; and there were visible in their neighbourhood lights which seemed to indicate the new outpost line taken up by the French. Then across again to the south-eastern edge, and there lay the Marne, silvered to whiteness in the moonlight; and Chelles, with its bright cottages, and Montfermeil, with its swarthy hanging woods, and the horse-shoe farther to the south. How often during the month so nearly closed had I looked up at Avron from these spots—at Avron hostile and dangerous; and now, here I looked down upon them from that very Avron, with its fangs drawn, and not a Frenchman near its summit.

It surprised me much, looking at the abundant evidences of precipitation visible, that the French should have removed all their cannon except two (one dismounted, the other abandoned in transitu); and still more so, looking at the evidences of the German fire, that they should have been able to do so. It is about as easy to transport a big ship about the country as it is to

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move a big gun after it has been dismounted; none of the French guns could have been dismounted, with the single exception just noted, else we should have found both gun and carriage where the damage was done. It seemed to me that the infantry men must have skedaddled in a panic, and that the artillerymen, fearing an assault from infantry which they had no means of resisting, had removed their guns before an absolute necessity existed for evacuation from the strength of the German fire. They were wise, if this was their reckoning.

During the 29th, the German batteries continued in full work against Forts Rosny, Noisy, and Nogent, which by no means allowed the transaction to be a one-sided one. Each had its satellites in the shape of detached auxiliary batteries, and they chiefly have devoted themselves to the reply. It was believed that the forts had in a great measure denuded themselves of artillery for the furnishing of these. Conspicuous already among those auxiliary batteries was the Redoubt de la Boissière, on the slope of the bluff behind the village of Merdan. The German batteries also found leisure for an occasional salutation in the direction of Bondy and Grand Drancy.

A deserter was brought into Gonesse on the 29th, who reported that Ducrot had been living in Drancy ever since the 21st. Ducrot, he further reported, had been assiduously engaged in strengthening his offensive position, and constructing works, with a view to dominate Le Bourget, Le Blanc Mesnil, Aulnay, and Pont Iblon. According to the deserter, there were now in and around Drancy four batteries of naval guns of heavy calibre, three batteries of long 12-pounders, and two batteries of mitrailleuses. Three days before such tidings as these would have made one devoutly wish that the inundations

were longer, broader, and deeper, and that there were no bridges. But now they could be listened to with equanimity, for operations were rapidly approaching completion, that would enable the besieging force to reply no longer with field artillery, but with batteries of siege guns of a power and range calculated to render it advisable for Ducrot, if he still held to his doughty resolve not to re-enter Paris alive, to look for safer quarters than Drancy would then afford.

During the 30th, a languid fire was maintained against Fort Rosny, which appeared to be replying with only two guns. On the same day, Lieutenant Hoffmann, of the Engineer Staff of the Maas Army, visited Mont Avron, for the purpose of taking careful drawings of the plateau, and tracings of the positions which had been occupied by the French batteries. He was joined by Colonel Bartsch, and the conclusion was arrived at, that while the forts and redoubts remained capable of sweeping the exposed summit of Avron, it would be unwise to attempt the utilisation of the position for bombarding purposes. It was determined, then, to continue the steady bombardment of the eastern forts and of the adjacent villages, which continued to be occupied by French troops, both from the existing batteries and those in other positions whose construction was already far advanced. No doubt Avron would have afforded a splendid position for the German artillery, had it been easily tenable, and in a strait, I doubt not, it would have been utilised. Without this advantage, however, the result of the three days' firing had been something to be complacent about. Avron was "dead," and the Saxons had a night-watch on its summit. Villemomble had once again in its wrecked houses men wearing spiked helmets. Neuilly sur Marne, which the French had continuously

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held from the beginning of the siege, they held now no longer, and the German patrols perambulated it during the night. It was too near Nogent, while as yet Nogent's teeth were unblunted, to be occupied regularly as a post; but there was a good time coming. Launay was also German once more, and Gagny, which conventionally had never been utterly lost, was again Saxon beyond all question. The outpost line had made a real stride in the right direction.

On the 31st I went to Brou, a village a few kilometres in the rear of Chelles, to spend the New Year's Day with my friends of the Artillery and Engineer Staff of the Maas Army, who had been quartered there for some time. The *Belagerungspark* for the eastern side had been formed there, as it was convenient for railway purposes, the ammunition and gun cars being run on through Lagny up to Brou, where the line skirted the park. Here all was activity. A whole battalion of the 105th regiment was engaged in filling the powder into shells, which had come empty and harmless from Germany. Huge siege guns on massive carriages were ranged in long rows, handled delicately by gunners who seemed to have a real tenderness for the grim monsters. There were sheds adjacent for the horses of the miserable peasants who, with their teams, had been requisitioned to cart first fascines and gabions, and then munitions from the park into the batteries. I don't know how it fared with the poor *habitants* themselves in the matter of shelter; I saw none specially provided. They had got past the grumbling stage into a kind of equanimity of misery; what worse could befal them? They belonged to villages and country places in the rear, and had been provided by the Maires on requisition. Would M. Maire ever pay them for the ungracious work on which they were per-

force engaged? Who would compensate the owners of the horses whose carcases lay about—fifteen in one group—dead of sheer cold before the sheds had been run up? When you asked them about their plight, all you could get from them was, "*Ah, Monsieur, c'est la guerre*," and that—so crushed were they—without the shrug of the shoulders, which I had believed a Frenchman would give when the doctor announced to him that he must surely die. It appeared to me that the miserables lived chiefly on *eau-de-vie;* I never saw one eating, and they were as gaunt as scaffold-poles. Clad in the everlasting blouse, they must have suffered fearfully from cold, and as you passed a train of them, their coughing drowned the rumbling of their wheels. I saw one man trudging along without stockings, his bare feet stuck in a pair of sabots. I don't exactly remember how many degrees below freezing point the temperature was that day, but I remember that on coming in-doors, I had to thaw my moustache at the fire before I could open my mouth to get a cigar between my lips.

CHAPTER III.

From the New Year to the Armistice.

THE New Year was celebrated very quietly by the Maas Army. I saw it in with a goodly company of frank comrades in a château at Vaires, where the pontooneer company of the Guard Engineers had their head-quarters, and with whom, as belonging to the same branch of the service, the head-quarter engineer staff, whose guest I was, messed during their sojourn in the adjacent village of Brou. Returning to Brou in the small hours of the morning, we heard still the sounds of conviviality from sundry apartments in the great château there; but one

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by one the revellers sank into slumber. The latest roisterer was a Frenchman; who he was or where he had got drunk, I have not the remotest conception; but about four o'clock I heard some one tumbling about in the passage, *sacré*-ing most vigorously through a bad fit of hiccough. Ultimately he rolled into the chamber, on the floor of which I lay, and even in his drink he was civil. With profuse *pardons* he asked for a light, but forgot what he had asked for the next moment, and staggered out again into the passage. A quarter of an hour afterwards I heard him making a speech to the sentry, and what ultimately befell him I know not.

On New Year's morning Colonel Bartsch, who was also quartered in Brou, received a very flattering souvenir in the shape of the Iron Cross of the first class, in token of the success which had attended the efforts of the Artillery under his command. The Colonel had a good right to be gratified at a distinction which is comparatively rare. The bearer of the Iron Cross of the first class wears it on his left breast, while he also wears the cross of the second class attached to his buttonhole. On the same occasion Captain Reinsdorff, the adjutant of the Artillery Staff of the Maas Army, received the Iron Cross for his share of the work that resulted in the French abandonment of Mont Avron, and soon after the same honour was conferred on Lieutenant Hoffmann of the Engineer Staff. Colonel Bartsch had brought so many fortresses to reason with those grim toys of his that one might have expected to see in him a formidable personage, smelling of gunpowder, with a frown like the sombre mouth of a 24-pounder, and a voice like its report. You could not well imagine a stronger contrast. He was a gay, dapper little man, as merry as a grig, with a fine open forehead, good-humoured smile, and a

close-cropped black beard. You would not imagine that it could enter into his heart to hurt a fly, and there was something quite boyish in the unaffected delight with which he sported his first-class Iron Cross for the first time on this New Year's morning. Young ladies would call him a "dear little man." Ask Strassburg, Toul, La Fère, Verdun, and a few other fortresses what they thought of him as seen from a distance; they might indeed reckon him a "dear" man, but in another sense.

On the afternoon of New Year's Day we had not, indeed, a "midnight meeting," but I was present at a very interesting religious service by candle-light. The scene was the fine old church of Chelles, one of the most venerable religious edifices around Paris, with massive stone pillars, old Norman arches, much stained glass, carved oaken work, and Popish decoration generally. The service was for the whole of the 24th division (Saxons). As we drove from Brou in the moonlight, we passed large groups hastening on the Chelles. It must be remembered that the service was an entirely voluntary one. There was no command laid upon the men that they should turn out of warm billets and walk four or five miles in one of the coldest nights of the year. Nevertheless, the old church, I venture to say, never had within its hoary walls so numerous a congregation. The officers whom I accompanied were unable to struggle their way up to the inclosure in front of the altar, and we were glad to find seats among the men by the side of one of the pillars. There was something indescribably affecting in the music. An harmonium close to the altar led; the strain was taken up by a military band in the balcony, and the two thousand men present joined in with one accord. There was no discord, but the church was too small for the volume of sound; yet one would

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not have wished it more slender. Then the divisional chaplain, standing on the steps of the altar, not occupying the pulpit, delivered what was something between a sermon, an address, and a prayer. He had the natural gift of eloquence; his words came from the heart, and they went to the heart. As he spoke of the night this time last year, in the happy homes of Germany, and contrasted it with the melancholy that now assuredly reigned in these households, in so many of which there was a vacancy, right many were the bowed heads and the moist eyes. Then the speaker struck a new key. The war had, indeed, made a sombre New Year in the Fatherland; it came upon many a household desolated by its ravages. "Aye, out there on those slopes across the river," he broke out with raised arm and flushed face, "there lie beneath the foreign sod many and many of our dear comrades and brethren never to rise again till the last trumpet sounds. But though each grave mound there is the sad emblem of so much misery, this New Year's Day, of broken home circles, of sorrowing parents, of weeping wives, of fatherless children, yet—" and here the arm swept round the head as if there was a sword in the hand's grasp—"yet we know our brothers died in a good cause. They fell *für König und Vaterland*, and surely they are *mit Gott*. And the war, sad and solemn episode in our history as it is in one sense, has had yet another glorious result. It has made our Fatherland not a name, but a reality. Already one race, one people, we are now one nation—Saxon, Prussian, Mecklenburger, Badener, Bavarian, we are all now children of the great German Empire."

The speaker paused, and through the dead silence of the moment there came the faint boom of the cannon on the batteries in the front. The sound gave him a new

cue. "Listen to the sound of the German cannon—a sound now, as ever, heralding the victory to our arms. To that sound you have listened on many a battle-field—you may hear it on yet other battle-fields before you re-cross the Rhine. But, oh! remember ever in its midst that it speaks the tidings for you, 'Death is near; prepare to meet your God.' The good soldier is always ready when the battle-bugle sounds—he falls into the ranks with needle-gun and ammunition ready for action; but there is something else for which he must ever be ready too—death, and that which follows death. His peace with God must ever be part, and the chief part for himself, of his battle equipment."

This will give an idea of the strain in which was couched what was certainly a most powerful and telling address. When it had finished, the instrumental music did not at once commence, but the vocalists of the band, under the conductorship of an under-officer, struck up Luther's "New Year's Hymn," the difficult part singing of which they accomplished with real beauty and feeling. Then another burst of instrumental and vocal music, that seemed to make the roof vibrate—the blessing—and the quiet dispersal of the great throng. As I walked to our carriage, we passed twos and threes of the soldiery talking earnestly of the words they had heard. Yet let me be candid. Their tone was rather that of connoisseurs than of Christians. "It was very beautiful," "His words were like fire," "I could have listened to him ever so much longer," and so forth—that was the tone of the comments. It was, as regarded the religious sentiment of the address, much the same tone in which men speak of an actor's performance, of a prima donna's singing, of a horse's galloping—not as if the matter were one of the deepest personal import to each one of them.

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The New Year ushered in a period of quietude after the turbulence and excitement that had prevailed in the latter days of the old year. When I speak of quietude I must be understood as using the term relatively. The distant sound of firing was ever in our ears. The batteries that had driven the French off Mont Avron were still firing steadily against the eastern forts and redoubts, and I did not learn that there was any perceptible decrease in the sluggish steadiness of the reply. From no position on this face of the environment were French infantry visible in any direction. Snow to the depth of two inches lay on the plains of Courneuve and Baubigny. The Seine was frozen over in places, but the ice was not reliable enough to furnish a natural bridge for the passage of troops, much less of artillery.

Highly creditable to the German besiegers were the friendly, and indeed cordial terms which they had contrived to establish with the villagers around Paris. These, indeed, were mostly of the humbler classes, either labouring folk or the servants left in the villas, and nothing could have exceeded the kindliness with which they were treated by those whom circumstances had so strangely placed among them, while they, for their part, appeared to feel and appreciate this kindliness. They were all gradually picking up some little German, while the German soldiers were by this time becoming quite proficient in a guttural broken French. In the early days, by Sedan and by Metz, it seemed as if the French summarised the whole German language in an emphatic "nix," but now they had begun to go deeper into the mysteries of the language. I had a Frenchman in Margency, who was a fund of recurrent amusement to me. He was the gardener of the château in which I had rooms, and he and his wife had remained behind in

charge of the place. I casually discovered how handy and obliging were the pair, and how much better I should be waited on by the same than by the willing but clumsy German *Diener*. I was rather a transitory resident in Margency, but each time I came back, honest Auguste had a surprise for me in the acquisitions of German which he had made during my absence. Apart from what may be called "household words," the French peasant's acquisition of German chiefly developed itself in the direction of ability to put questions as to the state of the war and the probable period of its termination. On the other hand, the first French that a German learnt was invariably the numerals and the appellations and values of the current coins. If every German soldier about Paris was not a master of Mr. Goschen's "Theory of Foreign Exchanges," he was, at all events, thoroughly at home in the relative values of French and German money, and when you now priced a thing with a German merchant or marketender, it was as likely as not that he named the cost in francs and sous instead of thalers and groschen.

The inclemency of the weather and the hardness of the recent service were making the inevitable impression on the health of the German troops on the eastern side of the circle. There were not, indeed, so many serious cases of illness in proportion as there had been around Metz in September and October. One seldom heard of dysentery; and typhus, except in lazarettes where there were many wounded, had all but died out. The chief diseases were of the bronchial and rheumatic type. Neither were very serious in the majority of cases, but both incapacitated the sufferers from present duty, and *pro tanto* weakened the field force. Then aggravated forms of inflammation of the lungs and rheumatic fever

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had become not at all uncommon, and the man who had gone down with either could not be expected to be fit for a resumption of duty while the winter campaign lasted. Illness would have been more prevalent than it was were it not for the now copious supply of warm clothing and blankets. Every soldier now had his thick double blanket, and at Christmas-time the *Liebesgaben* and home presents poured into the army in a steady and copious stream. A very wholesome regulation had been adopted in shortening the term of sentry duty from two hours to one. This did not necessitate a stronger guard, but only involved shorter periods of relief. Instead of the relative periods being "two hours on and four off," a phrase familiar to every soldier, they were now one hour on and two off, in the twenty-four hours, the duty being exactly the same, viz., eight hours on sentry and sixteen in the guard-room, or whatever might correspond to that shelter. The German soldiers had learned to go to sleep at a moment's notice, so that the shortening of the unbroken period for rest did not affect them injuriously, while the shortening of the spell of duty was much to their advantage. In very inclement weather I have known the one hour system adopted in home garrisons in Britain. In Canada, during the winter, it is invariable.

On the 2nd of January 7 new batteries had been completed on the east of Paris, flanking both on the north and south those already in existence, and fire from their guns began to be delivered on the following day. There were 13 batteries originally, the 7 new ones of course made the number up to 20, the new ones numbering from 14 to 20. Nos. 14 and 15 were close to the old batteries at Raincy, but faced directly toward Bondy and Drancy; Nos. 16 and 17 were in front of Chenevières, to the south of the horseshoe and close to the

bank of the Marne; No. 18 was behind Le Blanc Mesnil, No. 19 at Pont Iblon, and No. 20 on the slope between Garges and Dugny. When there had been 13 batteries, there had been 76 guns; now there were 20 batteries and yet no more than 82 guns. How arm 7 more batteries with only 6 more guns? The seeming puzzle admits of an easy explanation. The abandonment of Avron permitted the utilisation elsewhere of some of the guns that had been doing service in the old batteries at Raincy, Gagny, and Cournay.

Visiting St. Germain on the 4th of January, late business compelled me to stay there over-night.

Before ten o'clock on the morning of the 5th, the air, thick with fog, was burdened also with a sound to which one could not well give a name. It was not loud—at times it died away altogether, then it came again with a sustained song, as if of wind moaning through a keyhole. What could it be but the sound of distant firing far away round to the south? Was this then the day of days—the day so long waited for, so anxiously hoped for? It might be or not the commencement of the bombardment on the southern side, hopes and speculations as to which had been on every tongue for a fortnight before. There were some in St. Germain who laughed at the idea, while the din was all in the distance. "Do you think," asked they, with scorn in their accents, "that it can be the bombardment, when no sound comes up out of the immediate foreground in the south—when the tongues of Valérien are still?" I could not profess to arbitrate in the question, for Valérien and St. Germain were not within the ring fence of my hunting-ground with the Maas Army, and I had no acquaintance with the ground to justify me in even making up my own mind. So I took horse while as yet the question was

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undecided, and made the best of my way home toward Margency by the much-vexed Argenteuil and the dangerous gap behind Mont d'Orgimont. Before I had reached Sartrouville the noise had swelled to a much louder volume. As I rode through the woods of Bezons the clash of artillery sounded so near and so full that for the moment it struck me that the Frenchmen must be making a real effort at this point of the peninsula, and that they were trying to get over the Seine under cover of a heavy cannonade from Courbevoie and Nanterre. I looked forward to the open high bit of road between the forest and Argenteuil, with no small interest. It was never a safe road to travel, individuals of a bloodthirsty temperament making it a point to pot continually at the peaceful wayfarer from the farther side of the river. But when I got out upon it I found two French boys and an old woman placidly discussing the attributes of a very aged white horse, which stood meditatively listening to the criticisms passed upon it. Then there was no storm of shells tearing across the exposed bit of road, as would have been the case had the batteries at Nanterre and Colombes been demonstrating. Argenteuil was even undergoing a temporary respite from its peppering. But still, full, close, and continuous, came the steady roar of big guns from the south. I was on my own ground now—my foot on my native heath—and at liberty to think for myself. There was little thinking required. In the nature of things what I listened to, what made the aspen leaves tremble as the air throbbed to the crashes, could be nothing else but The Bombardment. It was with a real sense of relief, with that frame of mind which I may designate a relative cheerfulness, that I turned away from facing the sound, and struck towards Margency. Everywhere I passed there was a brightness in the faces

that looked up at me on the road and in the villages. The sentries, stern duty men, prone to demand inspection of "legitimations," men wont to halt to ponder ere they returned your greeting, gave me "'Morgen" with a ready heartiness that betokened how welcome was the sound that filled the air. "Bombardment" was the first word in everyone's mouth everywhere. At Margency Herr Secretair in the Feldpost bureau was so full of the subject, complicated as its discussion was by the dinner he was eating, that he actually forgot to charge me two groschen marked on one of my letters. Head-quarters beamed radiantly, and I almost expected to see the paymaster, who was given to such ebullitions, blossom forth into a night illumination.

We had a little English colony not far from Margency, in the village of Napoléon-St. Leu. They were humble folks, it is true, but what little I have to say of one of the families may perchance interest the reader. They were the servants left behind in Lady Ashburton's château, and I had taken some interest from time to time in ascertaining that they were comfortable, and not subjected to annoyance. This they certainly were not. Two artillery officers lived in the château, and its owner, if she has already returned, has doubtless found it totally uninjured, even to the cover of a book. On my return to Margency on the 5th, there came to me the old housesteward with a sad story, told in a broken voice. He had a daughter who was shut up in Paris, and the girl had contrived to send her parents a letter by balloon-post. It had arrived on New Year's morning, and the anxious mother sat down to read it with avidity. The letter killed her on the spot. With it in her hand—containing as it did a recital of privation and misery which I refrain from giving in detail—the poor woman fell

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dead to the ground. Her husband had buried her the day before I saw him, and now he came to me to ask whether I could do anything to get the girl out of her trouble, and also whether I could send certain letters to England. The latter request it gave me great pleasure to comply with; I was forced to tell the old man that his first desire was not to be thought of. He, for one, we may be sure, was praying God to shorten every hour till the capitulation. It is pleasant to add that the German officers showed him the most solicitous consideration in his trouble, and smoothed every difficulty for him with genuine kindliness.

The morning of the 6th presented a remarkable contrast in every respect to that of the preceding day. The latter had been cold to chilling of the marrow of the bones, and so thick that nothing was to be seen half a mile away. The former was clear, bright, and warm as a morning in the end of March. Yesterday the air was charged with sound; to-day there reigned the stillness of an Arcadia that knows not war. Men looked at each other in blank amazement. Had Paris, forts, big guns, bombardment, and the no-bombardment on the eastern side alike been spirited away? Had the French reply shut up our pretty Spandau toys in one day? Or, on the contrary, had those pieces of finished mechanism stove in the forts and batteries bodily? and if we were going up to Montmorency, should we see the white flag on the top of Montmartre in token that all was over? Men were reticent in expressing speculation, but at the corners of the straggling lanes of Margency I heard the words, "Capitulation," "Parlementaire," muttered as the Feldgensdarmes and the orderly-men gossiped in little groups. Making the best of my way to head-quarters, I found head-quarters in ignorance and suspense. Nobody could

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interpret this strange, ghostly silence. There had come from Versailles on the previous night a telegram stating that the King was well pleased with the results which the day's bombardment had achieved. So it was plain the silence was not on our part due to coercion. "Negotiations, then?" I suggested to my friendly interlocutor. "No, that cannot well be," was the reply, "since in that case we should have received instant instructions to silence our Maas Army batteries, and this has not been the case." "Are they firing, then?" I asked, for it might be that I had been struck with sudden deafness. "No, it would seem not; I can hear nothing. The silence is a puzzler, but we are sure to hear all about it within a few hours." Determining to anticipate by personal investigation the information which was kindly promised me, I rode off to the front of Montmorency, whence there lay spread before the eye the wide panorama of the north side of Paris. Still all was silent as the grave. There was the white foreground, the ice-bound river and the St. Denis chimneys smoking lustily according to their wont. Neither from the east nor the west came there the slightest sound of any firing. A slight haze bank hung over Le Bourget, which might have been snow fog or the filmy smoke of a cannonade; but if the latter it must have surely been audible. There I found three mounted officers, and we had a little talk about the position. They inclined to the armistice-negotiations theory, more especially as they had not heard a single shot since morning. As we spoke there came a white jet of smoke out of the grey side of La Briche. No sound—for all the noise made it might have been an escape of steam. But in a second or two we did hear something, the close swish of the shell, and then the explosion about fifty yards to the right. La Briche could not resist the temptation

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of the group. "No negotiations, then, that is certain," was the remark as we broke up and went our several ways.

This action of La Briche rather intensified the puzzle, because it seemed to knock away the only explanation. I could not go to the south, but I could visit the batteries about Pont Iblon, and get at the root of the matter. As I rode through Sarcelles I overtook the "Lady-birds" from Groslay. The "Lady-birds" are the Guard Fusilier Regiment, called by this familiar name by the good folks of Berlin from the circumstance that they pass through that capital, changing quarters from Spandau to Potsdam, every year in the month of May, the lady-birds' month. Dainty lady-birds are the Fusilier, to be sure; huge, hulking, six-foot chields, with broad shoulders and great stalwart limbs. Glad, though, would they have been, if they could, to accept the pretty little one's adjuration to their tiny namesake, "Lady-bird, lady-bird,. fly away home," for nostalgia was a disease from which more or less they all seemed suffering. They formed part of an intended demonstration, to consist of the bulk of the 1st, Guard Division, that had been ordered to be made in the region behind Le Bourget, and to be synchronous with the commencement of the bombardment in the south. Events in the latter direction had anticipated this arrangement, but the demonstration had not yet been countermanded, and I had a pleasant hour's ride with the officers of the Lady-birds. They told me how friendly the French foreposts were getting between Groslay and Villanteneuse, and how greedily they craved for Erbswurst, offering for a modicum of the same to pledge themselves not to fire for ever so long. Now and then the Frenchmen handed over a paper. A captain had *La Nouvelle France*, two days old, in his pocket. Among

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other details it mentioned that the force on Avron had been commanded by Colonel Stoffel, so long the French military attaché at the Court of Berlin, who if this were true, seems certainly to have been wiser in precept than in practice.

At Villers-le-Bel came the countermand for the demonstration, and I came on to Gonesse alone. What was my surprise to find all the German batteries from Gonesse to Sevran firing away vigorously! They had been at it since eight in the morning. In Gonesse I learned that the firing on the south side was believed to have recommenced at the same hour, and was certainly going on. Yet, at Margency and Montmorency we could not hear a sound. It was all owing to the air; it was to-day as non-conducting of sound as it had been the reverse yesterday. Even in Gonesse we could not hear the guns that were thundering, so to speak, at our elbows.

Afterwards I rode along the chaussée behind the batteries. There was firing from right and left of Pont Iblon, from Le Blanc Mesnil, and to its right, and also from an old field artillery emplacement between Le Blanc Mesnil and Aulnay. The fire was not very brisk, but it was ever so much brisker than the reply. It was chiefly directed against Forts De l'Est and Du Nord, and the redoubt at la Courneuve, but the leftmost battery also fired into Drancy, where the French still must have had some kind of lodgment, since they had fired a few guns from it in the morning. I remained for about an hour behind the batteries, and the French only fired three shots in reply during that period. Their shells were well aimed; one of the three came on to the chaussée, just behind one of the batteries; another exploded on the outward face of the parapet, and the third fell in the field a few yards to its front.

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On this day (the 6th) there was a considerable moving of troops. The 2nd Division of the Guards evacuated Sevran and Aulnay, and came farther up to the north-east. The Saxons came northward in their room, unfolding again into the old positions occupied before Mont Avron forced the Saxons to stand four or five deep on their ground, instead of the ordinary three, and thus to narrow their front. The movement extended all round, and among other things it relieved the tension of the 4th Army Corps, which covered an immense front, although not a dangerous one. The "dislocation" had a feature that from one aspect was ludicrous, and from the other sad. Who could refrain from laughing when he passed a battalion, half the men of which carried chairs, while there was a string of carts behind, laden with mattresses, sofas, tables, washhand-stands, crockeryware, and an endless assortment of the contents of a furnishing warehouse? I passed detached groups laden with the oddest articles. One man had a bird-cage with a canary in it; another had a picture lashed in front, and another on his back, in the sandwich fashion of our street advertisement men. There was pretty well everything belonging to domestic economy, with the exception of a cradle, and that useful adjunct to married joys I confess I did not observe. A stalwart "Sheep"—the Second Guard Regiment goes by the name of "Muttons," on account of some old recondite tradition or other—staggered along with a great glass shade on his back, inside which was a massive ormolu clock, supported by a pair of extremely badly-clad angels in brass. I asked him whether the clock was his. "*Ach nein*," grunted he in reply, "the cursed thing belongs to the battalion bureau." Not exactly the *spolia opima* were the mattresses and chairs of the inhabitants of the villages around Paris, but the be-

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siegers had come, with a kind of naturalness begotten of all but necessity, to regard them not as spoils at all, but as fairly their own property, at least for the time being. War blunts sadly the moral sense. In the eyes of none of the "Sheep" were the chairs and mattresses stolen, and yet when one comes to look into the question as a non-belligerent, what else were they? This much else at all events, that they made up a very laughable procession. You could not keep from laughing, although you must sigh the moment after, when you thought of the inhabitants of the villages coming home after the evacuation and finding what terribly sad havoc the German occupation had caused. After all though the doctrine of averages came in as some consolation. If one regiment carried out of Dugny and Bonneuil a given quantity of furniture, the marching in regiment bore with it also a certain quantity which was roughly an equivalent. I don't think any of the beds or chairs have gone back to Deutschland, and if the inhabitants when they came home did not find their own furniture in their houses, they found somebody else's.

Staying overnight in Le Vert Galant, I went forward to Ville Evrart on the 7th, in hopes of learning something about the state of Fort Nogent, from the holders of a position so close under its wing. The frost had given on the previous night, and left us to the full enjoyment of the first day of rain for many weeks. For siege work, frost, bitter cold as it is when it was so strong as we had had it, is infinitely preferable to wet weather. It was terrible work to man the foreposts on such a day as this, when men got muddy to the waist before they reached their posts, and when the wet and muddy clothes dried, if they dried at all, on the persons of the wearers. Fine time for rheumatism and catarrh, and other affections

of the same kind, was such weather as this, when the warmth opened the pores just to let the raw dampness come in. In Ville Evrart we had not mud but water. The place was all but flooded out. There was a partial block of ice in the Seine, lower down, and the river had overflowed its banks, and spread out on the always juicy plain. Nogent was utterly invisible in the drizzle, although to do it justice, it was occasionally audible in reply to the steady but slow firing of our batteries. Ville Evrart was a bad find in the way of information, but outside were rain, water and mud; inside friendliness, a good fire, and a sofa, which with a chair at its foot to eke out the length, made a decent bed. So I stayed the night with the Saxon lieutenant who commanded the post. And my ride to Ville Evrart had not been wholly barren after all; I had picked up by the way a little nugget all the way from Chelsea. Thomas Carlyle on the foreposts! The "sage of Chelsea" among the besiegers of Paris! Yea, verily, not indeed in the actual flesh and Scotch plaid, but represented by certain written words, the authorship of which no one could doubt, even if he were not familiar with the handwriting. In the German armies are many who know how to wield the pen as well as the sword. One of these ambidextrous men now in the Saxon Army before Paris here had sent a little book of his to Chelsea, sure that the matter of it would find sympathy there, and as I rode through the village in which Herr Waldmüller was quartered, he brought me the letter which Mr. Carlyle had sent him in acknowledgment. With the permission of the recipient I transcribed it, and here is the copy:—

"5, Cheyne Row, Chelsea, Dec. 27, 1870.

"Sir,—Three nights ago there came to me from

Dresden a beautiful little blue book, 'Die tausendjährige Eiche in Elsass,' which—especially as coupled with your kind inscription on the cover of it, bearing date 'vor Paris'—I read with very great interest. It is in itself truly a beautiful little book, put together with a great deal of art, and betokening in the writer a delicate, affectionate, poetic, and gifted human brother, well skilled in literary composition—not to speak of still higher things. Nowhere have I seen a more ingenious arrangement of whatever was bright and human in an antiquarian study into a really living and artistic form than this of Elsass and its 'Thousand Years' Oak!' That a soul capable of such work should now date to me from 'Le Vert Galant,' and the heart of a great and terrible World-event, supremely beneficent and yet supremely terrible, upon which all Europe is waiting with abated breath, is another circumstance which adds immensely to the interest of the kind gift for me; and I may well keep the little book in careful preservation as a memorial to me of what will be memorable to all the world for another 'thousand years.' I wished much to convey some hint of my feeling to you, as at once a writer of such a piece, and the worker and fighter in such a world; and I try to contrive some way of doing so. Alas! my wishes can do little for you or for your valiant comrades, nobly fronting the storms of war and of winter; but if this ever reach you, let it be an assurance that I do in my heart praise you (and might even in a sort, if I were a German and still young, envy you), and that no man, in Germany or out of it, more deeply applauds the heroic, invincible bearing of your comrades and you, or more entirely wishes and augurs a glorious result to it at the appointed hour. My faith is that a good genius does guide you, that Heaven itself approves what you are doing, that in the end Victory is

sure to you. Accept an old man's blessing; continue to quit yourselves like men, and in that case expect that a good issue is beyond the reach of Fortune and her inconstancies. God be with you, dear sir, with you and your brave brethren in arms.

"Yours sincerely,
"T. CARLYLE."

About the second week of January, when the new batteries had lost their novelty, and were found not to realise the sanguine expectations of those who had anticipated a speedy reduction of the eastern forts through their instrumentality, we seemed in a state of puzzlement for the time. Were we utterly knocking the French into a cocked hat? Were they squatting in their casemates, watches in hand, counting the hours and the minutes before the time should come when the defence should have reached the climax of heroism, and when, without spoiling their claim to deserve well of posterity, they could send the parlementaire out to the Prefecture of Versailles? On the other hand, were they silent and quiet as they were on some plan or other? were they striving to make us think it was all over with them, and that we had extinguished them, only to turn upon us presently and make a harder attempt than ever to rend us? It was a curious crisis. Day after day, hour after hour, our batteries, all the way from Chenevières to Gonesse, were steadily pelting away at something or other in the nature of hostile positions. On the night of the 7th for instance we began to think we had done a great deal. Rosny and Nogent had not fired a shot all day. Drancy had been a dumb dog. Du Nord, de l'Est, and Aubervilliers had just done enough to let us understand that their pipe was not utterly put out—no more. Then we got com-

placent, not to say triumphant. We had "silenced" Rosny and Nogent, that was beyond question. Somebody of a sanguine disposition intimated his conviction that Rosny had but one gun on its ramparts, and that it had been dismounted. Another gentleman, whose forte was saturnine wit, suggested that Ducrot did not want a fire to keep himself warm in Drancy, and, indeed, that he must have some time before found the quarters too hot for him. We did not let ourselves be led away exactly into buncombe, but we were very anxious for the end, and everybody knows how much the wish is father to the thought. Well, the morning came laden with its eventualities. What were they? The white flag, general silence of the forts, Ducrot's coat-tails visible to the mind's eye fluttering behind him as he skedaddled, a triumphantly pious telegram from Versailles, and a general gaudeamus? All the other way. Rosny and Nogent the "silenced" were firing just enough to show that each had more than one gun, and that nothing was farther off than a condition of "dismount;" Drancy, the despised, absolutely flared up, and gave us back quite a warm cannonade, regardless of our speculations as to Ducrot's coat-tails. But the day before we had thought Drancy not only silenced, but abandoned. Abandoned batteries don't, as a rule, fire three or four rounds a minute. No doubt Drancy must have been undergoing a heavy punishment, but it came up for it like a glutton, and seemed to have an unlimited capacity. I imagine a good deal of pains had been taken with the place. Although it looked detached, and although our fire could converge on it from several points, there had been time to improve its few natural advantages, and it might perhaps be best described as a kind of informal outwork of Aubervilliers. My information led me to believe that from that fort to it there ex-

tended across the plain a more or less regularly constructed protected way with a continuous entrenchment and strong earthworks supported by batteries at intervals. It was curious, not to say suggestive, how the French clung to this position out on the plain, when they had given ground everywhere else on the east side. In itself it was not worth a second thought strategically—it must have had some relative value in their eyes, else why should they have continued to hold it now that, instead of being aligned with other forepost positions of theirs, it was not indeed altogether detached, but the pharos on the end of a pier running out into an ocean, raked wholly by German artillery? It is unquestionable, I think, that they continued thus limpetlike to hold on Drancy because of its value as a base of operations against Le Bourget, the key to the easiest natural road out of Paris, nor do I believe that till Colonel Bartsch's guns opened their thunder against St. Denis, the idea was definitely abandoned of an eruption by this face.

January the 9th presented still abominable drizzle of fast-falling minute snow flakes, coupled with intense frost, that made the atmosphere as thick as pea-soup, and the roads as impassable as if they had been made of glass lubricated with grease. A bombardment in such weather could not be brisk. Still, the German guns had been pegging away with a measured steadiness, and, to judge by the faint sounds that came to us from the south, there was no want of activity there. Preparations were steadily going on for increasing the din on the north side. Colonel Bartsch had moved to Villers-le-Bel, along with Colonel Himpe, and a park of artillery, brought down from Mezières, had been established there with all its accompaniments of mud, grenade-filling, trains of country carts, and

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miserable peasants. St. Denis, its forts and town, were to be subjected to a systematic bombardment. The scientific men had been over the ground and chosen the positions for the batteries, the which I shall presently describe in detail; then had come staff-sergeants of engineers with tape and pegs; and now the working parties were toiling by night and sleeping by day. Long before, in case of need, vast quantities of fascines and gabions had been woven together in the forest of Montmorency and the wood of Arnouville, and those had now found a use and were being carted under cover of fog and darkness to the places where they were to be utilised. The loading-up depôt for the Montmorency was the lawn in front of Rousseau's hermitage. Forts Rosny, Noisy, and Nogent still preserved their strange silence, with the blinds down or the shutters up, whichever expression may be most applicable. No liberties were, however, taken with them, for the mask of silence was distrusted. The Redoubt de la Boissière above Merdan was the only French work on the east side that continued to manifest any activity, and its fire was steady, although very sluggish.

When visiting Soisy, to have speech with some French deserters, I saw General Manteuffel as he halted in that village to dine with General Alvensleben, on his way to Versailles, prior to taking up his new command—that of the 5th Army. He had left General von Göben with the 1st and 8th Army Corps and Kummer's Landwehr Division, forming the 1st Army, to dominate the North, and keep Faidherbe in check. He himself was to take command of the 2nd, 7th, and 14th Army Corps, to form a separate army, which was already on its march to support von Werder, and baulk Bourbaki's attempt. General Manteuffel was confident that von Göben was

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left quite strong enough to stamp out Faidherbe, and keep the North in order.

It was quite in accordance with German forethought that before the middle of January the dispositions had been all arranged that should follow the capitulation of Paris, should hostilities still continue to be maintained in the provinces. These dispositions certainly did not comprehend, as some reported, a retirement on certain provinces of France, leaving meanwhile isolated garrisons in the strong places outside these districts. Nothing could have been madder than that policy. It would have involved a forepost line to which the circle around Paris was a bagatelle; armies standing ever ready, waiting for the concentrated attack of French armies, choosing their own place and their own time. A French success in such circumstances needed only a pushing General to make an invasion of Germany practicable. Three or four days' forced marches from the line fancy dictated to rumour-mongers would have brought the red breeches again on to the Exercise Platz above Saarbrück. There would have been no "masterly inactivity" in such a policy; it would have been pure fatuity. No; if the French had obstinately refused to throw up the sponge and own to the loss of the stakes, the punishment, sickening as it was, was perforce to go on. Manteuffel's duty, after foiling Bourbaki, was to bring to reason Lyons and the south-west. Two days before the formal capitulation of Metz, the 2nd Army Corps, it may be remembered, took the road for action elsewhere. That corps was now once again on the march—this time eastward; and I know that other orders of readiness had been already issued before the 10th of January, that all the dispositions had been made, and that all that was being waited for was the right time in the judgment of the

military authorities. In the event of the continuance of the war after the capitulation of Paris, the Maas Army was to have been broken up, and its commander, the Crown Prince of Saxony, with the 4th Army Corps and the Guards, was to have gone away northward, with the duty of subjugating right to the water's edge the whole of France lying to the northward of Paris. This arrangement would not have superseded General von Göben even nominally; he would still have retained the command of the 1st Army. Paris, of course, was to have been occupied militarily, and its garrison was to have consisted of the Bavarians, Saxons, Würtembergers, and Mecklenburgers. Further details with which I became acquainted have ceased to interest since the contingency to which they related was happily averted.

Till the 10th of January I had occupied very comfortable quarters in a château in Margency, known familiarly in the head-quarters of the Maas army as the "Guesthouse." But the "Guesthouse" filled up so that there was scant accommodation for guests. There came to head-quarters for a day's visit a certain Russian Prince, and what was to be done for him in the shape of quarters? There came unto me Hauptmann von Wurmb, our quartermaster, full of polite regrets to disturb, but with a request that I would make room for the Prince. There was a château of great beauty and comfort in Andilly, he said, close by, to which he would be glad to escort me, and which I was free to consider my own. Andilly is a hamlet a little higher up the hill of Montmorency, about five minutes' walk from the head-quarter château. It was added, with great geniality, that I was not entitled to reside in the "Guesthouse," since I was no longer to be considered a guest, but "one of ourselves." The objurgation which I felt inclined to launch

against the Russian Prince, I repressed when I saw my new dwelling-place. Talk of the hardships of war! Why, as the result of the change I became the sole occupant of a château, in which there were gorgeously-furnished public rooms, a billiard table, a library, ever so many snug bedrooms, a hot-air apparatus, carpets, blankets, sheets, a good cellar of wine, everything, in short, "suited," as the advertisements say, "for the occupation of a nobleman or gentleman of position." The place had not been injured so much as by the breaking of a glass. There was a French gatekeeper and his wife, and a French gardener and his wife, and the quartette had nothing to do but wait on "Monsieur." If any lady of my acquaintance had desired a camellia for her hair, she would only have had to send a "trusted courier" across to Andilly, and she should have been accommodated punctually. For there were in "my grounds" a hot-house, a special camellia-house, and an orangery. I quailed in sight of the luxury, dreading lest it might prove my Capua, and tempt me from braving the chances of casual quarters with a shake-down or a heap of straw for a bed.

This same village of Andilly was less eloquent of war time than any other place in the neighbourhood. Nearly all the inhabitants had come back who had left —numbers never had quitted their homes. You saw children playing in the street; and as I passed to the Feldpost in the morning, I could hear them hum over their lessons in the "École Primaire," in the Mairie. The village was strongly anti-Republican. It would have been heartily glad to see the Emperor back; or, if that were impossible, it would have been delighted to be ruled over by the Orleanists—which of the two was quite immaterial, only please, "for the love of God, no Republic." I must

add that the village was very drunken, at least its male population was. You see they had nothing to do but chop firewood and wait for the surrender. There was no want of money, as most were gentlemen's servants, or hangers-on of some kind to the neighbouring *propriétaires*, who had all fled. And there were two wine shops where very bad brandy was retailed, and which were ever full of chattering, gesticulating individuals in blue blouses and wooden shoes, who seemed to get the more civil in the same ratio as they got the more drunk.

The 11th of January brought little perceptible change on the eastern and northern aspects of the siege. Drancy had been seemingly definitely silenced, if not abandoned. The three easternmost forts were silent and blinded, but this was no synonyme for "silenced," and that they were distrusted was evident from the avoidal to occupy the plateau of Mont Avron. The Redoubt de la Boissière continued firing. Aubervilliers fired very heavily and continuously for some hours against the batteries at Le Blanc Mesnil and Pont Iblon. The new batteries in front of Chenevières had produced more appreciable effects than any of the others. It seemed to have driven the French out of St. Maur, and, in conjunction with the guns at Noisy, to have greatly quelled the firing of the continuous work above Joinville, which had Gravelle and La Faissanderie for its flanks. The importance of having cleared the peninsula formed by the most southerly bend of the Marne, and at the throat of which is St. Maur, must be obvious by a glance at the map. The gunboats were lying, with their steam up, in the reach of the river that skirts the flank of Fort La Briche. They had, four or five of them, and more than once, made short raids out to fire a shot towards Epinay. Fort La Briche itself had been comparatively silent lately, but on the 11th it

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and the double crown work Du Nord fired with some persistency into Epinay, St. Gratien, Ormesson, La Barre, La Chevrette, Deuil, and Montmagny, in fact all round our forepost line to the north-west and north. I am not aware that any shells have fallen in Pierrefitte, but it is likely enough. It was noticeable that the projectiles thrown by La Briche were of inferior calibre to the large shells it had been wont to fire, and it was thought probable that that fort had been at least partially denuded of its bigger guns, with their ammunition, for the strengthening of the southern positions. The signs which I have narrated were not uncommon portents heralding a sortie, and, in anticipation of any effort of the kind, I made the circuit of the forepost line, extending from Epinay, where the line of the Seine was quitted out of respect to Fort La Briche, around the half-moon in the plain, the other horn of which rested on Stains. Epinay, once the most beautiful of all the beautiful villages on this north side of Paris, was a shattered wreck. Its church was smashed, riddled with shells; its population had long fled, and its aspect was unutterably desolate. The gunboats were pounding into it as I was being civilly entertained by the officer of the 31st Regiment who commanded for the day. What had been once one of the finest houses in the environs belonged to a brother of M. Crémieux, of the Provisional Government. Between French shells and German "belligerent rights," the place was wrecked utterly. The floors of the deserted rooms, in which the wind whistled gustily through the shattered windows and the shell-holes, were littered with mouldy papers. There were layers of cancelled cheques drawn by Levy, Crémieux, and Co. on the Bank of France, nearly all for large sums. The road was very much exposed between the villages, and collisions between the patrols

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were of nightly occurrence. There had been quite a little fight outside Ormesson on the previous night, upwards of forty shots having been fired, at random no doubt, for I heard of no casualties. In this village, which is not an English mile from the guns of La Briche, and which had by no means escaped its tender mercies, it was strange, and indeed affecting, still to see inhabitants clinging, poor precarious wretches, to what had been once prosperous homes. The château of La Chevrette, once the residence of Madame d'Epinay, Rousseau's friend, had escaped with wonderfully little damage from shell-fire, although it would hardly have been an eligible residence. The walk across the open in front of Deuil, from La Chevrette to Villanteneuse, is not one exactly to be prescribed as a pleasant relaxation for a holiday; but then its disagreeables and dangers disappeared in the knowledge that one was going to Villanteneuse, a village which till the morning I had believed to be still, as regarded one end of it, in the French hands. It seemed, however, that the Germans had quietly got possession of it a few nights before, and certainly there they certainly were occupying the place as far as the church, which is at the St. Denis end of the village. Then there is a bit of open ground, and presently, about 150 or 200 yards away, are the walls surrounding the grounds of the château of the same name as the village, where the French were still located. If the sun rose or set in the south, the place is so near St. Denis that the long shadows of the chimney stalks would all but reach it. You heard of fraternising hobnobbing over the contents of flasks between the sentries under cover of the night, of requests made and granted for lumps of sausage and pipefuls of tobacco, and really nothing seemed to be more natural. The sentries did not need to bawl to each other to

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ascertain mutual friendliness. The grey-coated gentleman yonder, who now and then showed little bits of himself, I could have conversed with in quite an ordinary tone. On the heights above Pierrefitte the batteries, being constructed for the edification of St. Denis, were already far advanced; the one on the Villanteneuse side of the height was, indeed, ready for the guns; the Stains batteries were also progressing rapidly. A careful inspection of St. Denis and its surroundings from the closest accessible point did not impress me with the idea that any preparations for an *Ausfall* were going on, and no troops were visible on the other side of the inundations, in the vicinity of La Courneuve. Returning *viâ* Montmorency, I paused as well on the terrace for a last look southwards; and lo! huge clouds of black smoke were rising away over the western shoulder of Montmartre, just about the place where in a very clear day one could see the towers of Notre Dame. The smoke evidently rose from a burning area of no small magnitude, and it was continuous, rolling away on the wind in great swarthy folds. The fire that caused the smoke must have been far behind Montmartre, although it was over its shoulder that I saw it, and there was too much of it to have been caused by the burning of a single house. Of course, the connection between German shells and a big fire in Paris was not conclusive; but the coincidence of bombardment and fire had a certain suggestiveness. The smoke continued to thicken during the half-hour we stood watching it. When darkness came on no flames were visible, but the cloud became lurid as if the fire lay too low behind Montmartre to be itself visible, while it threw its reflection upward.

One beautiful autumn afternoon—it was the 7th of October, although now it seems years ago—I witnessed

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the Landwehrmen of the Division Kummer falling in their ranks as they stood, rather than give ground before the furious assault that burst out upon them from the works to the north of Metz. In earlier pages of these volumes I have tried to describe what I witnessed and what I felt —inadequately, I am conscious, for there are certain feelings that will not somehow go into writing, strive how you may to give them expression. In the course of my daily duty it fell to me to write of what I had seen, in the columns of the newspaper, as whose representative I was on the field. In no long time there came to me the first of a series of very pitiful letters—letters that made me shudder when I saw the under-officer with the bundle from the Feld post, although I knew that the packet was sure to contain letters from loved ones over the water. But with these there came with some frequency others. It so happened that what I had written in the *Daily News* found its way into most of the German papers, and not a few were the Landwehrwomen—alas! that so many were in truth widows—who, in their simple reasoning, concluded that he who penned it must have a soft spot in his heart, and would try hard to answer the questions they asked as to how it had fared with the fathers of their children. That I did what I could in this way, under difficulties that must occur to any reader, I believe not a few humble families in the Fatherland would bear ready testimony. The sad stream flowed toward me again while I abode before Paris, this time from Saxon-land. God help us—no man feels war till it comes home to him in some such way as this. Morning after morning, that smiling secretary at the field-post in the park handed me over letters, which, were I to copy a few of them, would bring the water into the eyes of every reader. Some were from friends asking

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after friends—these were generally wordy and occasionally inflated, although always doubtless genuine. But brothers wrote simple questionings about brothers. Fathers wanted to know about sons, wives about husbands. Oftener still, mothers were the questioners. Poor creatures, how precise were the details! Regiment, battalion, company, aye, and a personal description now and then besides. "Tall, slender, with bright blue eyes and curly auburn hair, very small hands, and a greenstone ring on one of the fingers of the right hand, and his ears pierced." This minuteness, it was explained, should I happen on Fusilier —— lying on a battle-field. Ah, fond mother! there would have been little brightness in the blue eyes in that case, and I should have had to look a long time before I found the "greenstone ring on one of the fingers of the right hand." There comes a lump in my throat when, looking over the packet, the most touching souvenir man could have of the war, I light upon a tear-blurred epistle from a poor woman in Kamenz, who, it seemed, had seen some extracts from my correspondence in some Saxon paper. She wrote that she "was sure I must be a father, and would not spare, therefore, a little trouble to get information for a mother about her sons." She had given two hostages to the Fatherland—in what guise could the Fatherland redeem the pledge? Was it easy to tell her, think you, that one of her sons lay behind Brie with twenty inches of frozen French earth on his breast, and comrades unto the death—comrades in the grave—right and left of him? That I had seen the other in a ward in the Noisiel lazarette, contemplating with a philosophy that seemed begotten of a cigar, the stump of one of his legs that the doctors had stripped for dressing? Strike up the martial music, ring the joy bells; fire the salutes! Let the cities illuminate, and the mob roar itself

hoarse at the news of victories! God knows all these counterdins are needed to drown the groans from hearts wrung by war.

The 13th of January was a day of dense fog and equally dense dullness. From the east we heard the lazy thud of a big gun now and then fired in protest of total inactivity. Sometimes there came a faint sough from the south that might have been a cart-load of stones emptied in Epinay, or might have been the attenuated noise of the southern bombardment. I saw a regimental officer this day, who had come from Versailles, bringing the tattle and gossip of the second "Staffel" of little big men located in the Hôtel des Reservoirs. His report was that, unofficial or semi-official, Versailles was not at all pleased with the results of the bombardment, so far as it had gone, and especially was disgusted because some 200 shells said to have been projected into Paris had not produced the effect of a capitulation. I ventured to interpret this news according to my own lights. I know that the dukes and princes of the Reservoirs did not wish for the bombardment at all, and had been therefore not indisposed to cry it down. Now that it had commenced, however, there was a not unnatural, although very mistaken, impulse to weigh its effect against the effects of former bombardments by German siege guns. "No fortress has stood our breaching artillery over three days except Strassburg, and that for little longer." "Avron was swept clean in thirty-six hours." "We have been pounding away at these eastern forts now ever so long, and for not a few days at the southern, and yet who can see the holes in them that a serene Pumpernickel could walk in at?" The worthy Pumpernickels of the Reservoirs forgot what these forts surrounding Paris were. Avron was a thing by itself; the most stupendous blunder that

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a garrison containing a corporal of engineers ever perpetrated. But Mézières, Phalsburg, Toul, Verdun, Strassburg —one and all of them fell either of starvation or because the population of the towns around which the fortifications were built were being burnt and bombarded out. I believe, trusting to memory, that in this war Strassburg was the only town in the fortifications of which were battered practicable breaches. The forts round Paris had no internal population; no houses to be burnt; no children to be blown up as they played in the gutter; no closure of their supplies either of food or ammunition. They had to be battered to bits on their own merits; and you don't batter to bits in a day, works built and protected as they were. There seemed no reason that, bar assault and bar panic, the bombardment of the Paris forts might not last as long as the food inside Paris. But there is starvation and starvation. There are few communities that would not arrive all the sooner at the conclusion that starvation pitch has been reached, when a bombardment is going on around them, and occasionally into them, than if hunger pinched them in peace. Why did Paris hold out? Scarcely, surely, with the forlornest hope that it could ultimately escape the doom of capitulation; but to deserve well of the country of which it is the capital—to give time, by engaging the attention of so many of the enemy, for the provinces to resuscitate themselves—to earn for itself a name for enduring heroism to last unto all posterity. But Paris must have been surely all but hopeless for itself before the middle of January. And nobody can deny that the defence of Paris, had Paris capitulated then, would still have been one of the grandest episodes of modern warfare. How much more then when she bore the terrible strain yet fifteen days longer?

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It would not have been pleasant for such French officers as had broken their parole to have been re-caught by the Germans; still their plight would probably have been preferable to that of officers who had deserted to the enemy, and who might have been given up or re-taken. A message was sent to St. Denis, to acquaint the French chiefs with the fact of the apprehension of three deserting officers who had lately come over the Seine. Trochu sent back a grim and curt message:—"I am already acquainted with the disgraceful fact, and it would be a great kindness if you would send the scoundrels back into Paris, or if there are obstacles to that, if you would yourselves shoot them."

It was observable about this time that drunkenness was on the increase in the German army besieging Paris. In the active campaign preceding the siege you would hardly ever have seen a man drunk; now hiccoughing gentlemen making a staggering exit from the shop tenanted by a marketender were far from uncommon. There were more causes than one for this. The men in a siege get inexpressibly *ennuyé*, and somebody has said that the climax of *ennui* is delirium tremens or suicide. Perhaps even a stronger cause was the want of beer, and the consequent necessity, if a man drank at all, to take glass after glass of rot-gut rum, schnapps, or arrack. If you give a German plenty of beer, you seldom see him actively drunk. He may be passively muzzy, but with thirty or forty glasses inside him he will go through his facings so as to satisfy the sharpest sergeant in the service; but spirits double him up, unless he be an East Prussian or a Pole. The former can take a stint about equal, I reckon, to a seasoned Scotch Highlander; the latter reckon brandy no more than water. I marched, in the early part of the war, for two days with a company of

the 63rd Regiment of von Tümpling's Army Corps. They were all Poles; half of them spoke no intelligible German, and the raw spirits that they put out of sight without so much as winking struck me with abject amazement. We had little or no beer around Paris. A beer-lover myself, I knew all the "sure finds" on the northern and eastern sides, and they did not number half a dozen. Now and then a few stray casks came to what may be called the out-quarters of beer. One day in Margency I saw on a marketender's shutter the label "Bier!!" conspicuously displayed. This was in the morning; in the afternoon the ticket had disappeared; the beer was drunk out, and disappointed men who had come in from the neighbourhood on the strength of the winged report were turning away, muttering speeches the reverse of soft.

Up till the night of the 13th January, it might fairly have been said of the defenders of Paris that their actions were good, if one had regard to the Scriptural explanation why certain people loved the darkness rather than the light. The French certainly had never manifested any love for the darkness for any other purpose than that of wasting the ammunition of great guns. They had never snatched the opportunity of a dark night to make a dash on an exposed German forepost; never marshalled their forces under cover of the night, that they might be ready for the assault and surprise with the peep of dawn. That comical major of Mobiles, who, when he was surprised at his dinner after dark in Ville Evrart, grumbled most furiously that such tactics were in violation of civilised warfare, and that there was a tacit understanding that after sundown fighting should cease, expressed, I take it, pretty closely the general opinion on the subject of the defenders of Paris. They were not even prone to take advantage of fogs. Nay, Trochu had referred

to fogs as standing in the way of his exertions, although most men would be inclined to think a fog was just the thing he would have fervently prayed for. But the night of the 13th witnessed the double revolution. On that night—to make a bull—the moon did not rise till the morning; the night was as dark as a wolf's mouth, and the fog besides was so thick that in getting along you had almost to lean against it and press it out of your path. I was thinking about bed, after quitting the Feld post-office in Margency, when I heard a sudden burst of heavy and close firing. As I stood listening, report after report came up the valley, that could only have proceeded from the big throats of the guns of the forts of St. Denis. Then there was a spurt of faint musketry fire, then a louder burst, the din between artillery and musketry gradually becoming continuous. It happened that in the afternoon I had been having a discussion with a staff officer as to the likelihood of a sortie out of St. Denis, either towards Stains and Pierrefitte or toward Epinay and Enghien. He took the view that the French, not being rank maniacs, would make no such attempt; I contended that, a sortie in any direction being now an indication of mania, if seriously expected to succeed, there was, to the perception of the besieged, rather less insanity in coming out in this direction than any other. Was this sudden firing, I asked myself, my triumph over my friend of the staff? It looked very like it from where I stood; but Margency was a deceptive place as regards sounds. So I took to horse, and set off for Montmorency as fast as I could.

Montmorency was "alarmed," but not turned out. The opinion of those with whom I spoke there was that Stains and Dugny were the objects of the attack, the noise of which was swelling louder and louder. There was no

guide by eyesight. The fog was so dense, that one could not have seen a shell burst 100 yards in front of him. Anyhow, whatever was going on was farther east than Montmorency, and the great guns of the St. Denis forts were in full swing. The way to Stains, if a man had any reasonable desire to get there whole when the forts were firing, was to go to Arnouville, and bend backward again by the road leading through Stains into Paris. When I got to Arnouville I had, therefore, overshot Stains, and still the noise of the musketry was south, a little east. It was not Dugny; that was too near. Was it possible that it could be that unfortunate Le Bourget again in trouble? A passing orderly from Gonesse gave me the "office" opportunely. It was Le Bourget, and the French out of Drancy had been pitching into it ever since ten o'clock—it was now eleven. He did not know the dimensions of the attack, but judged it to be considerable from the noise it made. Well, I had ears of my own. "Was he carrying the alarm?" "Nay, Gott bewahr!" and he jogged on contentedly. I made the near cut through Dugny, and got into Le Bourget about half-past eleven o'clock. I cannot say it was a strange scene, for you could see hardly anything; but there was sufficient to engross other senses. Behind walls and in the shelter of the court-yards and their entrances stood the men of the 1st battalion of the Queen Augusta Regiment, which had just been hurried up from Pont Iblon. They were in reserve, for they were not wanted. Shells were crashing in the already smashed and battered houses, and the rattle of musketry was incessant from the end of the village. I took it for granted that the old bone of contention, the railway station outside the village, and close to the Lille road, was what was being fought for, and cautiously adventured in that direction, intend-

ing to go as far as the barricade across the road. In the darkness I ran up against an officer standing out in the open coolly smoking a cigar. The officer was Major von Thümmel, commanding the 2nd battalion of the Queen Elizabeths, which formed the garrison of Le Bourget for the night. But there was no fighting for the railway station, for the unanswerable reason, as the Major explained, that no railway station existed now. It had been pounded to splinters in December, and, no longer affording any cover, the Guards had utterly demolished it, and had used the available wood to make their fires wherewithal. The Queen Elisabeths thus held the barricades on the roads, three of which diverge near the Paris end of the village, certain loopholed shelter afforded by garden walls, and sundry detached houses of great strength, which form a kind of suburb on the Paris side of the little brook Molleret, which passes through the village at right angles to its principal, and indeed only, street. They were mostly concentrated in these, one company, however, being in the houses farther back, to keep up the communication with the Augustas. The outermost posts were held by a company of the Guard Schützen Regiment, these extending away in exposed field watches on the margin of the Molleret; to the left of Le Bourget, as one looks toward Paris.

There was a lull in the firing presently, as regarded musketry at least, and so Major von Thümmel condescended to enter the doorway wherein I was only too glad to shelter myself, and give me the history of the evening. It was not very eventful after all. Our outposts, it seems, as early as eight o'clock, had heard significant sounds in Drancy, which the French still obstinately refuse to vacate. There were bugle-calls and the tread of mustering men, and (so near were the positions) there had been heard also the tramp of

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men being marched across from la Courneuve into Drancy. I must mention, by the way, that this space, naturally a level plain, almost bare of houses, had been furrowed by the French with three successive continuous lines of entrenchments. One interpretation of this operation was, that they had so far sapped up toward Le Bourget; another was, that they had thus triplicated the defences of a tract they might have judged to have been exposed. Anyhow, the farther parallel touched with its left the la Courneuve road at a point in advance of that village; came with a slight sweep to the Lille road at a place where there are two or three houses; and was continued with a little more bend to the end of Drancy nearest Le Bourget. The second line had its left on la Courneuve itself, and its right on the farm of Drancy, in the rear of the village of the same name. The *repli* line was the road from la Courneuve to Baubigny. It was inside one of these lines that our foreposts had heard the Frenchmen coming over into Drancy, to act as supports probably. A little before ten the guns—first of Aubervilliers, then of de l'Est, du Nord, and, last of all, of Romainville—had begun to shell Le Bourget furiously. Then two field batteries in the first French line between the Lille road and Drancy had got to work, and suddenly, just after nine, came a splash of musketry fire out of the thick mist and darkness. The Queen Elizabeths knew what was coming. Their patrols had been out feeling the interval between Le Bourget and Drancy, and the advance of a strong body of French troops had been notified. Every man was under cover; every man had finger on trigger and muzzle out to the front. So, when the French fire came, the Elizabeths gave it back steadily and with interest; not acting so foolishly as to rush out to close quarters in the open, but lying snugly behind their stout

barricades and the strong walls of the houses, and firing in the direction whence came the French fire. It seemed no Frenchmen were visible. They were within a hundred yards, but came no farther. After firing they stood for awhile, then gave ground and fell back towards Drancy. Yet, again, about eleven, they had come on; much the same features characterising this attempt as the last. And now had they got enough, did I think? asked the Major; or did I think they were gluttons, and would come at it once more?

They answered his question, not I. Just as he spoke came the "Steady, men!" from the officer by the barricade. There was a dull sound of tramping, sharpened by a few isolated shots, and then a confused belch of musketry fire. I heard the officer by the barricades order —"*Schnellfeuer!*" and *schnell* was, beyond a doubt, that same *Feuer*. Nor were the French behind-hand in their reply. One could hear the bullets pattering on the walls on both sides of the road, as if the fog had burst out into big hailstones. This steady firing lasted some five minutes, then the French musketry fell away. In the comparative silence from the front there were audible, easily, the shouts of the officers, "*En avant!*" "*En avant!*" One officer—judging by the direction whence came the firing, he must have commanded the right—had a very shrill voice, and as he screamed rather than shouted a wretched dog, close by, began to bark in opposition; whereat the Queen Elizabeths laughed consumedly behind their cover. Another officer—how I pitied the poor gallant fellows—ranged from wrath to sorrow in his desperate efforts to make his men charge. "*En avant*," he began, and repeated once or twice. "*Sacré nom de Dieu, en avant, canaille!*" And then he was ever so much nearer us, and must have dashed out to the

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front alone—"*Pour l'amour de Dieu en avant, mes enfans!*" But the *enfans* didn't see it. Indeed, they did not see the pleasure of staying where they were. I heard no command of retreat given, but the firing dropped away to a distance, and intermittingly, and then ceased altogether. At a quarter to one there was an advance on the other side from la Courneuve, but enfiladed in the way as the troops composing it were by the guard field watches on the Dugny road, they never got so close as the assailants from Drancy, nor did they hold their ground so stubbornly. Till three o'clock the forts continued their fire; then all was silent again. And so ended this sortie—if you can call it a sortie—against Le Bourget. German loss: one man of the Queen Augustas; two, of the Queen Elizabeths severely wounded. The Augusta man had his shoulder smashed by a shell: three men of the Queen Elizabeths, slightly wounded. No officer touched. But surely there must have been ever so many Frenchmen killed and wounded? the reader is entitled to ask? Perhaps there were—indeed, I don't see how it is possible that they should not have suffered considerably. But they left nothing behind them, except here and there a red patch of blood on the snow-covered ground. Patrols of the Guards were beating the front all night, as well to ensure security as to pick up any wounded men they might fall in with. They found none. The French had carried off their dead and wounded.

On the 14th the guns of our batteries, 18, 19, and 20, continued firing heavily into Drancy, and there came a boom through the thick air from the southward that spoke of the gunners of Raincy, Gagny, and Noisy-le-Grand being busy likewise. There was no renewal of the attack on the part of the French, and the forts of St. Denis were almost wholly silent.

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During the latter part of my residence in Margency I received a considerable number of letters both from England and from various parts of the continent, sent me by English families who had residences in the northern and eastern suburbs of Paris, and who were anxious to learn what fate had befallen their houses and furniture. Many of these it was impossible to answer on account of the difficulty of definitely recognising the places inquired for. But there were certain general facts capable of application to individual cases. In any village or district that was not in the immediate forepost line, the property of neutrals had been as much as possible respected. The property of French residents had been treated with equal deference, in cases where either the owners themselves had remained, or where they had left responsible servants to represent them. Such a course was obviously necessary also for neutrals, such as English people. It did not suffice to stick up the Union Jack, lock one's doors, and clear out, trusting to the talismanic influence of the bunting. But as, for instance, in Lady Ashburton's château at St. Leu, and in Madame Sapey's residence in Andilly, in which latter I was now located, leaving behind the servants had secured total immunity from any injury whatever; and these may be taken as illustrative cases. There were other instances where servants had abandoned their master's houses, after being left in charge of them, with the result that they were pillaged by mauraders and by Francs-tireurs before the Germans threw their grapple round Paris. Such was the plight of a once pretty house in Montfermeil, concerning which its owner, an Englishman, wrote to me from Nice. When the Saxons came they found it already a wreck internally. Had it been spared by the Francs-tireurs it would probably have been occupied by officers, and so escaped material hurt. But there being

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no furniture left when the German occupation took place it had been relegated to the soldiers, and was usually inhabited by a Corporalschaft of a Saxon regiment. Still no material injury had been done to the house. A painter and glazier might cure all the hurt the Germans had done it. The upholstery work necessary must go to the débit of the Francs-tireurs. Around Montmorency, St. Brice, Ecouen, Clichy, Montfermeil, &c., this may be taken as a typical condition of the habitations. Farther to the front again, the wreck was more thorough, because there, the shells from the French forts had a voice in the matter. An English lady of the name, I believe, of Stephens, had a beautiful residence in Pierrefitte, with a fine picture gallery. There was a shell hole through the biggest of the pictures, and the château had been otherwise extensively ventilated by similar masterful expedients. Respecting this mansion, I afterwards learned, that one of the last thrown from Du Nord in reply to the bombardment had fired it. There was a beautiful mansion belonging to an English family on the verge of the Forest of Bondy before Raincy, and to the right rear of the Villemomble station. If that family has yet come back to what was once their home, they must have recognised the need, not alone for the painter and glazier, but for the mason also. The place was occupied by the Saxons for about a month as Outpost No. 5, and Mont Avron refused to respect its neutrality under such circumstances. It was as nearly as possible laid in ruins.

The fog was not so thick on the 14th; but there was a bright sunshine and a fall of small snow. Either the air was in an exceptionally good condition for conducting sound, or there was an exceptionally big din somewhere, for the noise of distant heavy firing came ever and anon in a very discomposing way. Nothing in the siege opera-

tions was calculated to make a conscientious man more nervous than this undefined and indefinable sound of remote firing. If he disregarded it and stopped at home, induced thereunto by bitter inclemency outside and by comfortable quarters inside, he could not quit himself, as every wind-puff brought the noise toward him, of the dread that he might be missing something of importance; and if he kicked off the slippers and drew on the long boots, what, oftener than not, had he for his pains? Many a time did I chase this same sound much as a man hunts a Will-of-the-wisp, ever thinking that the next crest would bring me in sight of the work, only to be disappointed, and be farther off the nucleus of the sound than when I started. On this occasion I hardened my heart sedulously against the temptation, because there were reasons why one should not be out of the way of head-quarters even from hour to hour; but it is impossible to convey to a home reader how uncomfortable this constant distant unexplained booming made one. One consolation was that head-quarters had no cognisance of anything abnormal going on; and the sound was philosophically set down, by those whose duty it was to know, as emanating from the southern and eastern bombardment.

But about four o'clock in the afternoon the firing became so hot that one could stand the uncertainty no longer. After all, when I got to Montmorency, it turned out to be nothing very serious. The northern forts had noticed something—it must have been very dimly—that they did not like in the neighbourhood of the heights above Montmagny and Pierrefitte, and were pegging away very furiously at these seemingly solitary slopes. Solitary, however, they were not, for the working parties were taking advantage of the fog (which had thickened since

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morning) to expedite by a spell of day work the completion of the siege-batteries getting ready for St. Denis. All round the forepost semicircle from Epinay to Pierrefitte there was a tolerably brisk musketry fire, but it was at long range, and no positive attacks fell to be repelled. Argenteuil had been full of noise all day, fuller than usual. I think there is a chance of lead mines being discovered in the vicinity of this town in some future age.

Before going to Soisy, where I had an engagement for the evening, I made a detour into Epinay, from which direction the sound of the musketry fire came the most strongly, to ascertain for myself what was doing. That there were French sharpshooters on the long island in the Seine, the crackling intermittent fire therefrom seemed to prove, although the gentlemen themselves were invisible in the fog; while the German posts on the Epinay bank now and then drew a bow at a very wild random venture. When in Epinay this afternoon I saw handled for the first time a weapon which I learned was coming into considerable use along the northern foreposts. It was called the *wallbüchse;* it was of the needle pattern, but the balls were of iron, and the calibre was at least three times greater than that of the ordinary needle-gun, while the range of the weapon was considerably longer. It carried 2,000 mètres, and sent a ball right through a fascine stuffed in a battery. It was, however, a cumbrous weapon, requiring to work it properly two men, one to hold it on the shoulder, one to serve the breech-loading apparatus. The recoil was so strong, that it required a spring coil in the stock to counteract it. The forepost men were much fonder of the chassepot with which they were supplied in considerable quantities; and were thus able to meet the French sharpshooters on about equal terms.

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In Soisy in the evening I was present at the opening of a packet sent from home to a young lieutenant of the 66th Regiment, with whose Company I had been dining. The worthy people, his parents in Magdeburg, understood pretty well what were the wants before Paris. Here is the inventory:—One box of very good cigars; a selection of wurst; a bottle of mustard, unfortunately broken; a warm woollen comforter; a glorious piece of flannel for the chest; a piece of German cheese; two pair of cork soles; two pair of long thick woollen stockings; a pair of wadded goloshes; fur gloves, photographs, a letter. The transmission of the whole cost about 9d. Verily the Feld post is a great institution!

The 16th brought a total change of weather. Frost and snow were alike gone, and we had a high wind from the south, bringing frequent splashes of rain on its wings. It brought something else besides rain—the bellow of the bombardment in the south, which dinged steadily from morn till night. There was a curious regularity in the sound. It did not come in casual and fitful gusts, but with a regular beat and stroke just like the working of a steam-engine. The mist was gone, and although the squalls, when they came, dimmed the prospect for the time, in the intervals the air was very clear, and one could see long distances. I sat at my window half the day, watching the southern bombardment. Strange as it may appear, I could see it with the utmost distinctness, owing to the elevated position of my habitation, half-way up the hill of Montmorency. In the foreground was Enghien and St. Gratien; then, across the Seine, Gennevilliers, Asnières, and the other villages on the peninsula; then Paris itself, looking absurdly near. With the glass I could see every detail in the structure of the Arc de Triomphe; and the dome of the Invalides and

the tower on Montmartre were equally plain. Right across Paris, on its farther margin, there was first a continuous streak of white smoke. This was from the guns on the *enceinte*. Farther away, in the middle of the rising background, were three distinct patches of white smoke. These must have been Forts Issy, Vanvres, and Montrouge. To judge by the smoke, it was clear enough that they were not silenced, nor anything near it. Still farther away and close to—in some cases on—the horizon, were more patches of white smoke, and these were the German batteries. Much nearer to us, and farther to the right, Mont Valérien had got his nightcap on, and certainly was snoring in his sleep very heavily. Let anybody try to look in this way across smoky London, and see what a failure it would be. At all times the atmosphere of Paris is clear; it was clearer than ever now when fuel is so scarce. If shells, as was reported, were regularly coming into Paris, they were not firing the city.

I heard many expressions of pain and indignation among the members of head-quarters staff of the Maas Army, on account of an utterly gratuitous falsehood put in circulation by the *Wiener Fremdenblatt*, to the effect that disagreements had occurred between the King of Prussia and the Crown Prince of Saxony, and the King of Saxony was coming to Versailles with intent to solder up the unpleasantness. The falsehood was too apparent to merit anything but contempt. Throughout the siege there never was anything but the utmost cordiality between Versailles and Margency, and nobody could live long in familiar relations with the latter head-quarters without becoming aware how genuine and hearty was this cordiality as regarded the chiefs of the Maas Army; and —judging from every appearance—how reciprocal was

the good feeling. Ever since I became acquainted with the composition of the Maas Army head-quarters staff, it had impressed me strongly as being a really valuable and successful auxiliary in the actual and virtual unification of Germany. Here we had Saxon officers, Würtemberger officers, Prussian officers, officers of the late Hanoverian Army, all working together in the most enthusiastic and genial manner, living together in the same quarters, associating round the same board, taking their daily rides together, and, in fine, blending so thoroughly, that the differences, of what can scarcely with truth be called diverse nationality, were utterly invisible. The same thorough blending was apparent right down the ladder till it reached to the private soldiers; among whom it was as marked as higher up. Saxons, Guardsmen, and Würtembergers, had stood to one another like men—like Germans—in more than two or three bloody tussles with the common enemy. They had shared the same bivouac; drank out of the same bottle; and they were, in the words of the old song, "brethren all." A large share of this thorough blending that had welded the Maas Army into a consistent whole, from the staff to the field watch, was due to the personal influence and personal attributes of the Crown Prince of Saxony himself, the commander of that army ever since it was first formed. The soldiers who were the subjects of his father spoke of their Prince with a personal love and admiration which was right pleasant to listen to. "He is a gallant soldier and a true man," said to me that wooden under-officer Schultz, his woodenness disappearing for the moment when he came to talk of his Prince. And Prince Albert had likewise won the personal liking and respect of the whole of his army, besides that portion of it which came out of Saxony proper. The explanation is simple enough. He

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is a plain, frank, manly soldier; too fearless for the heir-apparent to a kingdom; utterly unskilled in Machiavellianism, and, likely enough, quite blind to the advantages it may possess. His *métier* was to command the Maas Army, and he did so with credit and distinction. My own estimate of his soldierly frankness and straightforwardness of purpose carried me on to this conviction—that if on any point there ever occurred any misunderstanding between him and those at Versailles, he was just the man to get into his little oak-painted carriage, start off for Versailles without an escort—there never was a more unassuming Prince in such respects—drop into the Prefecture, have a quiet talk over the trouble with the King—who is a man of much the same straightforward sóldierly type as himself—put everything straight by that great institution, "word of mouth," and drive back again to dinner in Margency, nobody a whit the wiser; except, perhaps, his sagacious chief of the staff General von Schlotheim. But it was all but impossible to conceive how a conjuncture demanding any such visit could arise.

On the night of the 16th inst. there rendezvoused in Margency the officers, under-officers, and privates from the Guards and Saxons—one of each rank from every regiment—who had been selected as representatives to be present at the assumption of the Imperial dignity by King Wilhelm. My "humble roof" was called upon to afford accommodation for the sixteen officers. It is a little curious how thus fortuitously I should have come into close contact with the military deputation after having casually hit upon the civil one at Lagny in its way home from Versailles. Monsieur Bourgeois, at the corner, had some very good cognac; and among Madame Sapey's goods and chattels, of which I was the temporary

beneficiary holder, was a jolly big punch-bowl. I rather think we made a night of it, but M. Jules, Madame's serving-man, was equal to the occasion with a continuous flow of boiling water. Jules' personal opinion was, that *Messieurs les Prussiens* were *bons garçons*.

My guests, especially the sprightly young Guardsmen, were curiously cynical about the event of the morrow, in which they were to be participators. A studied abstention from the display of any emotion is fashionable among other Guards besides our own, but I should not have cared to be the man to chime in with this tone of the Prussian Guardsmen. One can take a good many liberties with the German if one only goes the right way about it; but there are topics on which one is sure to put his foot in it, if not very careful. I remember one day in the early part of the war, as I lay under a hedge near Vouziers, in the Ardennes, a train-man, with his short sword drawn, rode by me, hectoring a Frenchman, whose horse he wished to requisition, and he turned to me with a humorous grumble about the hardship of his duties. Taking up his tone, I asked him banteringly what he carried his "bread-knife" thus exposed for? Heaven and earth! you should have seen the man's face change. He called me a pig-dog; he swore he would split me up from thigh to throat for insulting the Prussian arms; and he looked uncommonly like as if he would carry his threat into execution. The more I tried to throw oil on the water the fiercer he got, and I really began to fear that I should have to recall old defensive memories with my walking-stick, when an officer opportunely turned up. I have no doubt these Guardsmen would have taken seriously amiss any chiming in with the tone in which they thought it *comme il faut* to adopt regarding their mission.

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Next morning (the 17th) the deputation waited on the Crown Prince of Saxony, and received his cordial congratulations as to the object of their mission; and then they took the road for Versailles, whither His Royal Highness, and the leading members of his staff, followed them. Versailles was off my beat, so I set my face eastward with intent to see what was doing among the batteries in that direction; and on a whisper—not on authority—that there might be a chance of seeing some more active operations than the besiegers had lately been indulging in on the eastern face. My road lay along the top of the ridge between Sarcelles and Bonneuil, whence a wide and sweeping view is commanded. The day, atmospherically, was one by itself—one of those dull, surly, yet semi-clear days, that are commoner in summer when thunder is in the air than in mid-winter. Under such circumstances, the aspect which Paris presented was weirdly unique. There is a town in the south of Scotland around which lingers to this day a ghastly memory of, which the elders shudder when they speak, and of which the young ones are thankful that they had no personal experience. Dumfries stands in the bottom of a cup, the edges of which are formed by hills. At no time is there much circulation of air. When fogs prevail, or when there is a stagnation of the wind, the stillness is positively painful. In 1832 the cholera raged in Britain, and it fastened its fell fangs on Dumfries. For days, for weeks, for months, it claimed its victims, till one-eighth of the population had been heaved into the pits in the churchyard, and till the ill report of the pestilential place was so strong that never a vendor dared enter it with his wares. And all these days—days when the pest stalked abroad relentless—there hung over the cup, in the bottom of which stands the town, a dull, heavy film—not dense,

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indeed, but mystically altering the sun-rays from bright gold to a lurid orange, and mantling the whole place with its evil shadow, as if some foul and persistent ogre of death were spreading his pinions over the place. As men walked the streets they felt to smell the cholera-breath, so stagnant and rotten was the air, and they went home and wanted graves ere morning. Let any man who would realise how a death-pall like this can hang over a city, read in Macdowall's "History of Dumfries" the chapter where the author describes the ghastly features of this visitation. As I looked down on Paris to-day there came vividly before me the description I had read of Dumfries in '32. All round it, save on the north side, surged up the foam of the white smoke of the bombardment. Over it hung the dull brown pall of the smoke thrown up by the exploding shells and the casual conflagrations, not large but frequent, which they occasioned. Underneath—below this brooding demon of brown smoke—the city showed out wondrous clear and plain. At times the sun's rays struggled through the black clouds that underlay the heavens; fell on the brown pall; battled through the crannies in it; and kissed lovingly some white house or metal roof in the beautiful city. Never can I forget the strangely beautiful and yet almost ghastly and utterly abnormal effect.

The eastern batteries had taken to volley firing. Instead of timing their shots so that you might have counted a patient's pulse thereby, they now loaded almost simultaneously and fired almost simultaneously. The two batteries between Pont Iblon and Dugny were at work with great energy as I passed behind them, firing towards St. Denis, but, as I take it, chiefly dropping their projectiles into Courneuve. The Blanc Mesnil and Aulnay batteries were pegging away at Drancy, which looked forlorn

enough to move the bowels of their compassion, if they had any. There had been no return fire for some hours, as I was assured by the under-officer when I halted in the little battery for a while. Our shells were falling and exploding all about the place, but never a shell came back. Now, it is easy enough, if a shell happens to come to hand to you, to know whether over against you on the enemy's side it is a shell that has exploded or a gun that has been fired, but if you don't hear the whizz and see (or feel) the splinters, it is rather bothersome to distinguish the difference. The sergeant and I agreed for a quarter of an hour that Drancy was silent, and that the explosions in its vicinity were the shells he was projecting, but suddenly there came a jet of smoke, not upwards and umbrella-shaped, but forwards and then upwards, in shape like a series of bed-pillows, and I ventured to express my opinion that these appearances betokened a shot. He differed in opinion—he was a "yearling"—but he owned up to his mistake like a man when the shell came whizzing over the parapet and exploded in the field, about one hundred yards behind the battery. This is the only evidence I saw that any battery on the east side of Paris was alive, with the exception of La Boissière, which was firing very steadily in reply to the Raincy batteries.

I had my ride to Clichy for next to nothing. And yet it was not for nothing. My eastward trip satisfied me that there was no immediate prospect of any attempt to establish batteries on Mont Avron or to assault any of the eastern forts, as I had vaguely heard was in contemplation. The *status quo* of steady slogging at the forts and batteries of junction was steadily maintained, without much apparent effect; but the people working them seemed satisfied, and it was not for outsiders to grumble.

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There was a rumour about guns having had what is vulgarly known as a "skinful" of work, and having to be allowed to rest; but if this was the case, certainly the other pieces were made to work double tides. The silent sulkiness of the forts was still preserved, with the exception of Aubervilliers, which was given to losing its temper now and then, and let drive in some direction or other. The St. Denis forts were very quiet on the 18th; their calm trustfulness in a peaceful future was touching, but, as they discovered by-and-by, fallacious. Argenteuil was vexed on the same day by much musketry fire; but Argenteuil was ever a barking dog, and the bite was never reported.

All the northern side the Maas army made merry on the 18th in honour of the event which on that day occurred in Versailles. Champagne was the first tipple to give out in the officers' casino in Gonesse. But when the champagne was done, the fellows philosophically took to beer, and when that in its turn was drunk out, they tackled the red wine without an apprehension as to the intestine commotion the heterogeneous mixture seemed calculated to produce. Weak stomachs are luxuries not to be indulged in by campaigners.

After a sulky, lowering, gloomy morning on the 19th, there came a clearance of the weather in the forenoon, and with it tidings of an important sortie to the south-west and west. No part of the Maas army was engaged, with the exception of the artillery division of the 4th Army Corps, generally quartered in Sannois. The batteries to the northward of Valérien, at Nanterre, Courbevoie, &c., and the big fort itself became eruptive about ten A.M.; and it soon became apparent that they were firing to cover the advance of French infantry by the roads and through the valleys of the peninsula of Genne-

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villiers. The columns of these headed for Rueil, designed to coalesce with troops that had come out behind Valérien round its northern shoulder, and struck out for Bougival, their front covered by skirmishers, and the batteries firing furiously over their heads. The attack extended all the way round to Montretout and the park wall of St. Cloud, and on this flank the fighting was heaviest and the sortie assumed the most important dimensions. A contingent was detailed to threaten Chaton. On a splendid position in front of the carrières of St. Denis, the artillery of the 4th Army Corps took up its ground, and made brilliant practice in enfilading the French advance on Rueil, as well as in convincing the force that set its face towards Chaton that it was not wanted there, and that a strategical movement in the direction of its own rear was an advisable operation. I heard bickers of musketry fire from the direction of Bougival till nigh sundown, but about four o'clock the artillery made the only sound on our face.

The artillery of the 4th Army Corps lost four men and six horses. They were the targets, nevertheless, of a very furious fire; but the shells fell into the mud, which was nearly knee deep, and although they duly exploded, were muffled by the mire and did little damage. The feature of the sortie, as regarded the northern side, was the armoured railway train, which came out on the St. Germain line, considerably beyond Nanterre, and proceeded deliberately to exchange discharges with the German batteries. There were two gun-trucks in front of the protected locomotive; each truck mounting a long gun that worked on a pivot, and seemed at once a very handy implement, and one, from the protection the armour afforded, tolerably safe to work. The German artillerymen devoted themselves chiefly to efforts for

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hitting and disabling the locomotive, and succeeded so far as to damage the chimney—which was unprotected—whereupon the affair retired into the rear of Nanterre. It was Ducrot's command, marching from St. Denis, which our artillery enfiladed to so much purpose as to delay its progress till too late to take the share which had been assigned to it in the operations of the day.

The Germans were evidently not filled with deep apprehensions as to the last writhings of the captive in their grasp here. Artillery was held to form bonds quite as strong as the infantry grip which so long had held Paris down. In accordance with a policy which I have foreshadowed, portions of the besieging army were already being spared to co-operate in more active operations elsewhere. On the 18th the 16th Brigade of the 4th Army Corps was dispatched by railway from Gonesse to St. Quentin, to strengthen the hands of von Göben. In addition to this exodus, there was on the same day a general movement of the troops on the northern front. Details would be wearisome, but the general result was what might be termed a bracing up of the inner circle. The sortie of the 18th did not seem in the slightest degree to interrupt the relentless prosecution of the bombardment on the south and south-west. I judged as much by the evidences of firing which were audible to us on the north side in the intervals of the fog and rain. A German journalist, who was my temporary guest, employed one of those intervals on the 19th in earnestly contemplating Paris through a powerful field-glass, preserving meanwhile a rigid taciturnity. When the prospect once more became obscured, he turned to the fire with the sententious observation, "Dey are getting dare gruel." The phrase smacked of Jemmy Shaw's or Ben Caunt's, at which haunts, I understand, my guest had been a fre-

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quent visitor during his single short visit to England; but it was very expressive. They were "getting their gruel," those citizens and soldiers in the white city out there to the south; and the man who should refrain to bear testimony to the enduring constancy and valour with which they were taking the punishment, would have claim neither to the title of a truthful reporter, nor to a capacity for some appreciation of a spectacle and an event unique in modern times.

Military writers are busy just now in analysing the distinctions between an army of the people and a professional army. I saw an incident on the afternoon of the 19th, trivial in itself, but which to the comprehension of one familiar with the attributes of a professional army, and who had been also for some months studying the workings of a national military system, was not without its significance. In a field I passed a squad of young soldiers who were practising the bayonet exercise. Presently the drill instructor stood his pupils at ease, whereupon, instead of grounding arms and listlessly waiting for the next "Attention," the squad fell each man to practising industriously the lessons that had just been imparted. There was one young fellow lunging as if he would skewer the garrison of Paris; another preparing to receive cavalry with a pertinacity that must have struck terror into a brigade of horsemen. Then the men took to criticising each other's performances, not chaffingly, but quite seriously, and even anxiously, individual expressions of opinion being, so to speak, illustrated with cuts. Now, is there a drill-sergeant in the British army who can conscientiously assert he ever witnessed a similar "stand-at-ease" episode in any squad he has ever drilled? I have seen a good many squads drilled, but the chief occupations of such intervals I have ever noted

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to be chewing tobacco, surreptitious attempts at horse-play, and anxious glances at the barrack clock. There is a standing direction to cavalry recruits in our service that they shall take opportunities for practising the sword exercise in their leisure hours. Whoever saw a cavalry recruit fulfilling this injunction? In some barrack-rooms there are masks and single-sticks, but their use is confined to a few who have had some knowledge of cudgel play before enlisting. The Germans cannot touch the French as swordsmen, but both could walk round and laugh at us. An English Dragoon can cut the sword exercise without depriving his horse of its head, and about one in every three is tolerably dexterous at "heads and posts," but not one in twenty have any conception of utilising the sword exercise in actual self-defence. Yet the sword exercise is the mere means to a defensive and offensive end; it is what Euclid is to the practical utilisation of the science of geometry.

"Eight o'clock to-morrow morning, sharp to time, on the steps of the Schloss." These were the parting words to me on the night of the 20th, uttered by an officer of the Crown Prince's staff, to whom I was indebted for many kindnesses. "Sharp to time" I was, but the steps of the Schloss looked quite forlorn in their desolation. It was, in truth, a forlorn and disheartening morning. All the Maas Army, from the Prince to the private, wished for bright, clear weather, and you could not see twenty yards before you. Was this an omen? Did it signify that what the weather could do to throw obstacles in the way of bombarding Paris, it meant to do with persistence? If so, the weather must have owned that it reckoned for very little when the Germans had their minds made up on a line of action. The night before everything had been reported ready. Colonel Bartsch

was not the man to leave loose stitches in his work, and the answering telegram came from Versailles, "Go ahead at discretion." I ought by the way to give a brief detail of what manner of work it was that Colonel Bartsch with his coadjutors Colonels Himpe and Oppermann had done. The armament of the new batteries consisted chiefly of the siege-train employed in the reduction of Mézières, and it had been brought down by the railway to Villers-le-Bel, whence it had been brought, partly on the night of the 19th and partly on that of the 20th, into the emplacements which had been stealthily prepared for it more than a week before. The batteries were ten in number, mounting sixty-two guns, of which thirty-six were ordinary 24-pounders, eight long 24-pounders, twelve long 12-pounders, and six short 12-pounders. There were also two mortars in position behind the Stains batteries. The guns might have been earlier pushed forward, but there was no occasion for hurry in this respect, pending the accumulation of a sufficiency of ammunition. Commencing on the right, there was no battery in the neighbourhood of Epinay. The nimble gunboats might have enfiladed batteries here. The field batteries on Mont d'Orgimont could take care that they did not do so as regards the other two in that neighbourhood, which might otherwise have been affected by them. These were—one battery (No. 30) of six 24-pounders behind Ormesson on the left of the Rouen Railway, directed against La Briche; one battery (No. 29) of short 12-pounders at La Barre, a little nearer Montmorency. Between Enghien and La Chevrette, almost directly in front of Montmorency, there was a third battery (No. 28) of 24-pounders. The battery of long 24-pounders (No. 27) stood just in front of the terrace of Montmorency, with a battery of short 24-pounders (No. 26) below it, above

Deuil. The height known indifferently as Richebourg or Pierrefitte (lying between the village of the latter name and Montmagny) presents on its summit nearest St. Denis a splendid offensive position for artillery, dominating alike all the forts; but the position was so much exposed, that it had been wisely avoided, without any detriment to efficiency. This long bluff, whose nose looks out into St. Denis, contracts about its middle, so that its promontorium throws forward, as it were, two sheltering wings for batteries stationed in the narrow waist behind. Its shape roughly resembles that of a wasp. This configuration of ground had been admirably utilised. The summit had not been loaded with guns, but two batteries (Nos. 25 and 24) had been, as it were, slung pannier-wise across the narrow waist, one on either side, so that they could throw a telling indirect and plunging fire down into the forts, while the bastion-like bluff in front of each was an effective screen against the French return-fire. No. 23 was just above Pierrefitte. On the slope behind the village of Stains (farther round to the east), with the butt ends of the guns toward Garges, were four batteries with the howitzers. On an advantageous position between Pierrefitte and Stains were batteries Nos. 22 and 21, and the mortars. Thus there was a converging fire on the focus of the forts from the radius of very nearly a semicircle. Of course the fog mattered something. True, the sights had been taken and distances calculated over-night, but gunners, like other Christians, have a natural pleasure in viewing the results of their handiwork, and with a clear atmosphere openings may present themselves that a mist effectually conceals. To give, then, the fog a chance to rise, the hour of commencing the bombardment had been altered from eight to nine. There was something melodramatic in the ex-

pectancy scene, and I wished that I were an artist. The mist had partially lifted. On the broad steps of the Schloss stood the Crown Prince, watch in hand, his handsome face bright with the excitement of expectancy. Behind him, in wistful silence, stood several members of the staff. Saddled horses, fretting at the restraint, were being led up and down on the lawn. At the gates were visible the watching faces of the straggling military and semi-military population of Margency—gendarmes, ordonanz-men, feld-postillions, the butcher, the Prince's grooms, and a representative of the marketender species. I once heard a travelling showman bawling in front of his booth, "Valk hup, ladies and gentlemen, and see the Hempror Solomon in hall his glory. Vith vun heye he is a-kintemplatin' the Temple, vith t'other he is ogling the Kveen of Sheba." As a feat of optics, this was a wonderful performance; but I would not be certain that our telegraph clerk did not match it this morning. He stood just inside the door of the office, and it certainly seemed to me that he had one eye fixed on the Crown Prince's face and the other on his instrument. A natural squint may have contributed to the facility of this dual vision.

The clock of the Mairie struck the first chime of nine; there came rolling up from Ormesson a dull muffled report; nearer in the wood behind the Schloss there was a clash, as a tree crashed down, that the woodsmen had kept upright by a single fibre in waiting for the event. Before nine had done striking the single report had swelled into a heavy diapason; the Crown Prince was in the saddle; the telegraph clerk hard at work with my message to England. So began the bombardment of St. Denis. Alas, for the short-lived lifting of the fog. Everybody had fixed his own point, just as you see sportsmen branching off when the hounds give token that they have

found a fox in the cover. The quickest was not in time to see so much as the smoke from a single canon. For the firing drew down the heavy mantle again, and the ears were the only organs called into exercise. The Crown Prince, with General Schlotheim and an aide, sat out the fog in his elevated eyry on Mont d'Orgimont, and must have been rewarded by a partial glimpse of what was going on between twelve and one, when the fog again lifted, or rather grew thinner. I tried place after place, but utterly in vain. Montmorency was blank, save for a general and a doctor; the white house on the crest above it had a balcony thronged with staff officers, and a sea of dense mist surrounding it. Enghien was a weariness of the flesh, and dangerously close quarters to boot. So I came home to my interrupted breakfast, and abode in hope that the mist might disappear later in the afternoon. The hope was destined to be fallacious. Although the mist did occasionally rise, just enough to tantalise one with expectation, it regularly came down again as heavily as ever. The Crown Prince, after three hours' weary and bootless sojourn in the little room in the observatorium, returned to lunch and discontent. Still the guns kept thundering on steadily; now warming to their work in the clearer intervals, then falling to the minimum regulation number of shots as the mist wreathed round them. Of results of my own knowledge I could not speak, because I had not been able to see anything, with the exception of a vague and dim attempt on the part of the French heavily-armed batteries at St. Ouen to enfilade our westmost one at Ormesson. This was about four o'clock—I mean what I saw. The attempt may have been going on before, and may have lasted longer. I merely caught a casual glimpse through a chink in the mist. It was respect for these batteries at

St. Ouen which had prevented the erection of any German battery nearer the Seine than Ormesson, and the contingency of a flanking fire from them had been carefully guarded against. The idea respecting the French fire impressed during the day on experienced artillery officers was that, although keen enough after noon, when the forts, and especially La Briche, pulled themselves together after the staggerer of the morning, the St. Denis forts were but weakly armed, and that with artillery of small calibre and short range; and the correctness of this estimate was vindicated on the surrender. One strong proof of this was that there seemed to be no attempt made to cope with the long 24-pounders on the brow of Montmorency, and the warmest French fire was directed against the heights of Richebourg, where the batteries were much nearer the fortresses. Of casualties on the German side the list for the day was trivial; one man was killed and three wounded (one an officer), belonging to the Guard Fusilier Regiment, quartered in Montmagny. This village was below the battery, and the damage must have been done by a blind shell fired from La Briche. I had expected a greater number of casualties, since the nature of the intermediate ground, well suited as it was for deployment under cover of mist or night, necessitated on the part of the Germans the retention of comparatively strong parties of troops in the villages and on the posts in front of the batteries. Even if the French did not fire into these intentionally, it is obvious that there was a likely billet for such projectiles as fell short. I thought this forenoon, as I looked out on the grey billows that filled the valley, what a chance there was for resolute men to make a spurt and give trouble and alarm at least, if they could do nothing else. And several times the rattling echoes of the big-gun reports sounded like the

bicker of musketry; and once or twice I made sure the infantry were at it; but no, it was only the sharp reverberation of the reports in the hills and dells behind. The town of St. Denis was reported at nightfall to be burning. All Paris might have been in one blaze for aught we in Montmorency could have told. But adventurous patrols brought the news in from the precincts of Villanteneuse that a large fire was raging in one place and two smaller ones elsewhere. A bad hour for the ladies of St. Denis, who, daintily gloved and booted, had admired the stalwart limbs of the Prussian Guardsmen taken prisoners at Le Bourget, and likened the soldiers of their own garrison to dwarfs alongside of the big East Prussian men. There was a bitter flitting this bleak January night, I ween, along the straight road leading by the pretty suburb of St. Ouen into the already densely-packed Montmartre. And the citizens of Paris would meet the exiled ones of St. Denis, and asking them "What cheer?" would get for answer that the inexorable Prussian cannon were smashing and burning on the north as on the south. Would the strong hearts melt, we asked ourselves, the tension of the stern determination overstrain itself, and so relax into the conviction that enough had been done against fate, against possibility,—against the luck that every Frenchman strives to hope for in the future—to prove to the world that Paris was not a place of frivolous pleasure lovers only, but that the lovers of pleasure in the old luxurious peaceful city knew how to dare and to endure beyond all previous conception?

At night the German fire was allowed to drop away to one shot per hour from each gun—sixty per hour, or one shot per minute—mere snow-flake business in comparison with the day's cannonade; and that was said to have been comparatively mild on account of the fog.

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Is the reader in a humour for a dose of statistics? If not he can skip this paragraph. There were, say, sixty German guns firing steadily all day at the St. Denis forts. Twice I timed the fire, and on one occasion made it twelve, on the other fourteen, shots per minute from the aggregated batteries. But there were periods of lull occasioned by fog, etc., and I have no doubt I am considerably within the mark when I say that six shots were fired per minute during the seven hours from nine a.m. till four p.m. This gives a gross total of 3,220 shots fired in that time. Of the batteries six were armed with 24-pounders, each throwing a shell of 52lbs. weight, four with 12-pounders, each gun throwing an elongated projectile of 26lbs. weight. It follows that the six 24-pound batteries threw in the time I have named 100,464lbs. weight, and the four 12-pound batteries 33,280lbs. weight of material; or, in other words, there were pitched into St. Denis during seven hours of this day very little under sixty tons of lead, iron, and powder. Fancy how the intermediate air must have been torn and vexed by 3,220 huge projectiles darting through it at an average velocity of 250 miles per minute. Fancy this pelting of colossal hailstones tumbling into so limited an area with a shower so profuse and yet so unremitting. Hailstones, say I? Why, hailstones are not full of powder, and do not explode, sending from half a dozen to a dozen massive, jagged, fanged fragments and splinters abroad centrifugally into upward space. There was used for each charge of a 24-pounder, six pounds of powder, therefore the firing off of the 1,932 shots fired by the guns of this calibre, used up 11,592lbs. of powder. For each charge of a 12-pounder was required a little over 4lbs. of powder —say 4lbs.; this gives the quantity used up by the 1,280 shots fired from guns of this calibre at about 5,120lbs.

Total quantity of powder used in charges 16,712lbs. Each shell fired from a 24-pounder gun contained four pounds of powder for explosive purposes—on the day's fire 7,728lbs. of powder fired away inside the larger shells. Each shell fired by a 12-pounder gun contains 2 1-10lbs. of powder—say 2lbs.—on the day's fire of this description of ammunition, 3,560lbs. of powder shot away inside shells. The consumption of powder in charges and for explosive purposes was, therefore, within a fraction of 22,000lbs., or, as nearly as may be, ten tons of powder alone consumed in a single day in one section of the bombardment. Remember they were at it on the east and on the south also, and one cannot be far wrong in estimating that in this one day there were close on 200 tons of projectile matter thrown upon the beleaguered forts and city out of the mouths of German cannon. The reckoning takes no account of the return fire, which was no trifle. Think of the labour and transport power involved in bringing to the front all the way from Germany 200 tons of material per diem for an indefinite number of days.

It seems to me that the whole war hardly afforded a more striking example of the military genius of von Moltke than the opportune railway trip he ordered for the 16th Brigade, forming part of the Maas army. Calculation had furnished him with evidence that von Göben would make his mark at St. Quentin all the deeper if he were strengthened by 4,000 or 5,000 men and a few guns; calculation and good information told him the hour at which this help would be good at need. The brigade quietly went away for the fight just as a lawyer goes down to Reading or Gloucester for the circuit; and the work done, it came back to its quarters before Paris just as the lawyer comes back to his cases in the Court of

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Queen's Bench. This device simply for the time converted 5,000 men into 10,000 men. Napoleon I. was, perhaps, the greatest utiliser of his soldiery by means of rapid movements, of all von Moltke's predecessors; but then Napoleon had not the locomitive and the *militär-zug*.

I never knew a German officer or soldier who was a family man that did not carry about with him photographs of the wife and the children. By this time the cartes were getting dirty and thumb-marked, for they were had out for inspection and admiration very often. You would see a couple of officers in the casino or at the mess table interchanging sights of photographs, and then would come a gossip about the children's ages. I watched the growth of a warm friendship between two gentlemen of my acquaintance, the first link in which was the discovery, at one of those quiet talks over the pictures, that one had a boy and the other a girl, who had been born on the very same day of the very same year. I have seen two huge hairy sentinels at a double post far to the front exhibiting one to the other the gallery of family portraits, fetched out of a sweat-besmirched pocket in the breast of the tunic. On the afternoon of the 21st I was standing by the white house on the hill behind Andilly, trying with but little success to get a glimpse of the firing through the fog bank, when there joined me two or three men of the 26th Regiment, and we naturally fell into conversation. Presently, as I turned to go, one of them remarked in perfectly good English, "Heigho! I wish this weary war was over, and I back in New York." The man had been for some years earning his two dollars a day as a house-painter in New York, and had got married and begot sons and daughters. When the war broke out he threw down his brush,

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shipped himself, wife, and daughter—the boys were dead —on board a North German Lloyd steamer and had fallen into his place in the ranks with no more fuss or consciousness of extra patriotism than if he had come for a holiday. It is the fact that men like this are in the ranks of the former that makes the difference between a national and a professional army. Of course, out came the photographs—he carried them, to be handy, inside the folded cuff of his great coat. "Ah! isn't she a fine woman just, and isn't the girl a beauty?" He was proud of his belongings, and had no stuck-up reticence about owning up to his pride. As I walked home after leaving him I fell a pondering on the differences in national idiosyncrasies, and there came to my recollection the pictorial contents of sundry French officers' knapsacks that German officers spoke of after Sedan and Metz, their noses in the air as if they inhaled a foul stink. Also whether it were in the nature of things that boozy old Tommy Tudor of the Royals should carry about with him, if sent on foreign service, the photograph of that slattern barrack-drudge, his wife Poll, whom human eye never saw but with dirty face, toozled hair, and a young one imbibing nutriment at a fount of nature extremely patent to the naked eye?

During the 22nd, 23rd and until four o'clock on the afternoon of the 24th, the bombardment of the St. Denis forts was conducted very languidly, the fog on the latter day being even exceptionally dense. At four there sprung up a furious cannonade, which was obviously not all one-sided. The French had utilised the night and the foggy day to repair the damages done to the forts by the bombardment; to bring into du Nord heavier guns than it had previously been manned with, and to throw out a field artillery force backed by infantry and gun-

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boats to threaten Epinay and Ormesson; and then they assumed the offensive when the fog partly lifted at four o'clock p.m. Listening to it I thought I heard infantry fire, but the echoes were so very deceptive, that I was assured that I was mistaken. There was a furious two-handed cannonade, lasting for an hour and a half. By seven p.m. all was over, and our guns had dropped back into the usual night average.

Two artillery officers, one a captain, were killed on the 24th in one of the batteries. On the previous night, a reconnaissance accompanied by engineers, approached close to the St. Denis glacis, and their report was that great damage had been done to the fortifications. In consequence of an attack of fever, I was an invalid from the 22nd to the 25th, and unable to gather information at first hand—always infinitely the best method.

When my servant (who dwelt in Margency with my horses) came for letters on the night of the 25th, he reported the probability of a sortie. I asked him where? He had no idea; his information was derived from an orderly who was forbidden to speak plainly as to the news he brought. Morning, however, brought nothing but the steadily remorseless fire from our batteries against St. Denis. There was no rattle of musketry borne rearward on the light wind; no sharp crack of field artillery filled up the brief pauses in the deep-throated noise of the siege guns. I found my way to the old haunt, the emplacement in front of Montmorency. Just below me were two long 24-pounders trying their hardest to represent six. By night there were to be six there in reality; originally there had been eight in this battery. Of these, six the night before had gone down into the middle of the plain, some eight hundred paces to the west of the Château of Villanteneuse. From the batteries in front of

Enghien the short 24-pounders had been moved forward to a position between the railway and the hamlet of La Barre, where the traveller by rail may no doubt still see the remains of the emplacement. The short 12-pounders from La Barre had been moved still farther forward, considerably in advance of the Epinay railway station, and near the side road which quits the chaussée to diverge into the village of La Briche. They were within about 1,200 paces of the glacis of Fort La Briche. The batteries on the heights of Richebourg, repudiating all need for a friendly screen, had come audaciously to the front, and were now cocked one on either side of the slope of the eminence. The French continued to fire both from La Briche and Du Nord, solely at the nearer batteries. Their practice was utterly contemptible. I saw shell after shell fall and explode in the open plain quite six hundred paces behind the battery at which it must have been aimed—that is to say, no other rational aim was apparent. Since the opening of the new and near batteries the French had not succeeded in hitting them once. It seemed to me that their fire was quite thrown away for want of system. Now it was a shell which you might guess aimed at Epinay; now one fell in Enghien—the outside of their range; then two or three in succession were let fly at the new batteries, all dropping wide. Presently Du Nord would fulminate impotently and intermittently against Pierrefitte and Stains; and then the gunners would take a rest. With these tactics every shot was thrown away. They never got a reliable range of any given point, and at the day's end must have been worse off by damages and loss of ammunition than at the beginning. If the Fort gunners had deliberately taken in hand a single battery, or two at the most, and concentrated a steady fire thereon, they might have had some

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chance of dismounting a gun or two, and at all events temporarily silencing one section of their tormentors. As it was, like the skunk, they threw their virus miscellaneously, and did hardly any harm. The German losses in the batteries had been ridiculously small.

The forts had been roughly dealt with beyond question. La Briche has two bastions, and the stone work had been sorely pulverised in places. This I could plainly discern with my glass. Some embrasures were bunged up altogether, presumably on account of their undue enlargement by the action of the German shells, and the trim neatness of the whole aspect had changed into a ruggedness for which I had almost written raggedness. But the forts were far from shut up; that was plain. Ordinarily they fired only slowly, but this was apparently from choice, for presently, as if the humour had bitten them, they would burst out into quite a respectable cannonade, not however from very many guns. The German artillerists and engineers asserted that the curtain, which was known to have been thrown up between the forts, had been utterly beaten down and destroyed, and that the covered way no longer existed; so that each fort had to depend on itself, or lean on supports from its direct rear. Covered ways, however, are not crockery ware, and I took leave at the time to doubt whether there yet existed any great difficulty or danger in inter-communication between La Briche and Du Nord.

The night before I had thought I heard some chassepôt firing, and it turned out I was not mistaken. The firing had come from French marksmen potting at the German gunners in the nearest battery over the ramparts of La Briche. The range, as I have said, was about 1,200 paces, far from an impossibility with the chassepôt, but not near enough to do any serious damage. Some of the bullets,

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however, I was told when I went forward into Villanteneuse, came pretty handy, and would have been bothersome if the German guns had been fired through embrasures. As they were not, but on the overbank system, the gunners were fairly covered against anything but an almost vertical fire. Of course, in front of and flanking their batteries the Germans had infantry posts and rifle-pits, and the Frenchmen were, I learned, to be introduced on the coming night to the knowledge that chassepôt-firing at gunners is a game at which more than one side could play.

The town of St. Denis had not been seriously fired since the first day of the bombardment. Especial orders had been issued to aim clear of the venerable cathedral, and every one hoped that, come what would, it might escape unharmed. When the German gunners were told to avoid hitting an object, their skill enabled them for the most part to comply with the injunction; with French gunners, from what I have seen of them, I think the order would be waste of words, and it might be as wise to let the thing take its chance. Was it possible that there was not an adequate force of trained artillerymen within Paris, when one came to think of the multitude of troops there of all arms? From the briskness of practice displayed from time to time, it was clear there was no lack of men to serve and load the guns quickly; where the fault lay was in bad training of the gun on to the object intended to be aimed at. Now this is the duty of but one man in a gun detachment; every gunner need not be a good No. 1. If Paris, after four months of siege, and after firing away so much powder and shot, was now short of expert artillery marksmen, the fault lay at the door of those chargeable with the conduct of the siege operations. They could not ride off on the pretext

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that they had found a scarcity of fitting men; they had time enough and practice enough to make a plethora.

One day, now more than a month previously, I had happened to be jogging along the road behind Pont Iblon, when a smart Vice-feldwebel accosted me with the somewhat startling question, "Do you know Gracechurch-street?" I owned, with the frank readiness of a Londoner, to a knowledge of Gracechurch-street. "Then, perhaps, you know Greenwich, too?" was the somewhat inconsequent second question. Vividly the memory of sundry dinners at the Trafalgar rose before me as I answered "Yes." My interrogator then told me that previous to the war he had been in business in Gracechurch-street, and had his private residence in Egerton-road, Greenwich, and after a pleasant conversation we parted. I learned afterwards that Mr. Hartwich had greatly distinguished himself by his conspicuous gallantry in the storm of Le Bourget, for which he had received the Iron Cross. Before the close of the siege, as a further reward for his valour on this occasion, he was promoted by the Emperor to a lieutenancy in the 4th (Queen's) Regiment of Guards. Thus, it seems, neither a desk in Gracechurch-street, nor family life in Greenwich, detracts from a good Prussian's willingness to fight for his Fatherland, or deteriorates the character of his valour. Speedy promotion, say I, to Lieutenant William Hartwich, of Gracechurch-street, City, and Egerton-road, Greenwich.

A little before this time I had the pleasure of a visit from Mr. W. H. Bullock, the able emissary of the *Daily News* Peasant Relief Fund; and was pleased to find that, after I had shown him several villages on this northern side of Paris, and after he had conversed with inhabitants whose testimony was to be considered trustworthy, he arrived at the same opinion which I had long held; that

while the active military operations in the neighbourhood of Paris were pending, it would be both a present mistake and a weakening of subsequent potentiality for usefulness were any large sum expended in this quarter for the relief of the poorer inhabitants. The vicinity of Paris is very different from the vicinity of Metz. Around the latter fortress the country is naturally poor, and it has no great capital for its centre, the supply of which formed the business and the study of the population. Long before the siege of Metz was over, the whole district had been utterly exhausted of anything calculated to sustain life in man or beast. There would have been real starvation—not starvation in that conventionally exaggerated meaning of the word into which many are apt to be betrayed—but for the spare rations of the German soldiers. Around Paris, on the north side at least, there was no such utter depletion of the means of subsistence, or rather, while it struck one that in the earlier days of the siege such depletion really existed, a recuperative power seemed to come into action afterwards, owing, as I reckon, to easier and more assured communication with the country farther back. About two-thirds of the population in most of the villages had utterly vanished—clean gone away out of ken. Some were inside Paris, no doubt; others away into the background of the lurid scene. This exodus was chiefly from the villages nearest the front. The people who remained in these forepost villages were very few, comparatively, and they were managing to live. They might have had concealed stores of their own; what they had not of their own, the Germans freely gave them according to ability; and the poor people kept alive, and would continue to do so till the siege should be done, in a precarious, unsatisfactory manner no doubt, but still not starving. Were you to have poured out on them the

biggest till in the Bank of England while they were in their then condition—hands compulsorily folded, houses wrecked, fields untilled—I do not see in what important particular you could have benefited that condition. In the villages farther to the rear, where the desolation was less marked, there was little destitution; neither lack of money, nor of the necessaries money will purchase. These villages around Paris must have been very rich in a quiet way. And I have an idea that those who had remained at home had made themselves heirs by a kind of natural succession to the food-stores of those who ran away. Of course everybody was living on his capital. The poultry woman, who used to send chickens and turkey eggs into the Paris market, was killing her hens and her turkeys, and selling them to the German officers. If the hostile occupation were to have lasted much longer, no doubt stores would have come to an end, and the villagers would have had to depend on the German troops, and sometimes be very hungry. But as yet there was no call for laying out money among them for their sustenance; and, as matters were, money expended for any other purpose than just to tide them over the dismal hour would have been wasted.

It was obvious, however, that there would come a time when every penny that we could spare would be urgently wanted. The arrondissement mayors of Paris had plenty of money, and that private enterprise was sure to bring to market material on which it might be spent. But it was very different with the suburban villages. I am strongly of opinion that in the warm flow of our sympathy we rather overdid the relief of Paris. We are a generous nation when our hearts are stirred, and he would be a churl indeed who should fail to appreciate the noble promptitude with which Britain succoured Paris in her

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extremity. But zealous and earnest as were the administrators of the English *don*, I am convinced that there was a relative superfluity after the first absolute pinch had been tided over, and that it helped to perpetuate that self-helplessness among the poorer classes which the forced inaction of the siege had made almost a second nature to a population never averse to idleness. I say relative superfluity, because, although it is obvious that the want, poverty, and shiftlessness of any great city will always be prepared to put forward claimants for relief in sufficient numbers to admit of the distribution of any relief fund however large, I think that the normal condition of the east end of London is more wretched than was the state of Paris after the strain had slackened and the revictualment been fully effected. Not that I would counsel for Bethnal Green a vast *don*, to be distributed with that perfunctoriness of discrimination which inevitably in the nature of things characterised the Paris distribution. Such a vast eleemosynary sowing of relief broadcast would but increase the area of demand for aid, and intensify and prolong a paralysis no inconsiderable proportion of which is already ascribable to mal-administered and indiscriminate pseudo-charity. But what we should judge it unwise to do as regards our own fellow-countrymen and fellow-citizens, it was surely *à fortiori* both unwise and unjust to do outside the bounds of Britain. I believe that the administrators, placed as they were in novel and arduous circumstances, acted as well and as wisely as it was possible for any men to act in such circumstances. But this I have not the smallest hesitation in affirming, that Britain, in her impulsive overlavish contributions to this fund, swamped Paris injuriously with eleemosynary succour, and, to square her balance-sheet of charity, stinted her usual outflow towards many deserving internal institutions. But if it

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seemed that wealthy Paris possessed within herself the means of speedy self-recuperation, it was obvious that the case was very different with the suburban villages. How the position of those struck one who had been living among them for over two months, it may not appear wholly impertinent to show by an extract from a letter of mine written shortly before the capitulation.

"To those villages hanging on to the fringe of the capital will flock back their old inhabitants, the refugees now in Paris, the waifs and strays now drifting about the back country. The snug cottages that they left, with the hectare or two of daintily-tilled garden ground and the winter store of provisions and firewood, they will find mere wrecked shells, incapable even of affording their owners a barren shelter. There will be an interval of syncope—that is inevitable—in which the mere keeping to life, without giving a thought to retrieval, will be a problem that many unaided may fail to solve. To face and dissipate the abjectness of this syncope, to plough up the dismal fallow waste of human misery that will be soddening round Paris—that is the task for us. Bread and meat will be wanted as the first requirement, but food alone will not stimulate the people sufficiently to shake off the apathy of despair their surroundings will so inevitably engender. Put spades in their hands; send them kitchen-garden seeds and young cabbage plants; give them the chance to feel that they are once more helping themselves, as they were wont to do before the thundercloud of war burst over their heads. The genial spring-time is not far off, and the tooth of Paris ever watereth after its salad stuff. With judicious help, not administered after a pauperising fashion—and pauperism is far readier than jealousy to grow by what it feeds on—the more humble inhabitants of the villages around

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Paris might be on their legs again by midsummer. I do not see how, with decent justice to our home charities, we can deal with any other class. Our rôle is not surely to give compensation for ruined villas or the sack of detached family residences."

It is pleasant to know that not a little has been done in the direction indicated in these lines. The administrators of the Lord Mayor's Fund have most judiciously applied for such purposes a share of the money placed at their disposal, nor has active seconding been wanting on the part of those charged with the allocation of the French Farmers' Seed Fund, and the Peasant Relief Fund of the *Daily News*.

Great sensation was caused in the head-quarters of the Maas Army by a curt telegram from Versailles, which reached Margency about five o'clock on the afternoon of the 26th January, to the effect that the northern and eastern batteries were to hold their fire after twelve o'clock on that night, unless the French fire should be continued later, and that they were not to resume until further orders, unless in a similar contingency. Off galloped Ordonanz cuirassiers on their mighty horses; the news spread like wild-fire, and the word "*Friede*" was in every one's mouth. We were aware that Jules Favre had been in Versailles on the 24th, but had assumed that his visit was connected with his anticipated journey to England. But about seven o'clock there came a rather more detailed telegram, stating that the French minister had returned to Paris in the afternoon, after a second interview with Bismarck, and that the prospects of a speedy arbitrament were favourable. Meanwhile the cannonade was slowly, and, as it seemed, half reluctantly, dying out. I believe the Crown Prince of Saxony sent out orders that it should not be pitilessly persevered with till the last moment per-

mitted in the orders from Versailles. By seven o'clock it had fallen away to one-third of the ordinary night regulation; between eight and nine only two shots were fired. The right to fire was, however, vindicated scrupulously till the very end. As ten struck on the cracked bell of the Margency Mairie, a single hoarse roar came bellowing up the valley, at eleven there was the solitary repetition; at the first stroke of twelve crashed out the report of the last cannon-shot of the siege that was fired on the north side. It was morning ere its echoes had ceased to reverberate in the glades of Montmorency and the quarries of Sannois.

Not a few there were in Margency who refused to put faith in the good tidings; cautious men who economised emotion, knowing how poignant would be the revulsion of the disappointment if no "*Friede*" should come of it after all. Everybody, however, remained up till after twelve o'clock to listen whether the French would renew their fire. When they did not—at least on our side—even the unbelieving Thomases began to let themselves think there must be something in it, after all. There seemed to me so much in it that I thought it might be possible to get into Paris by dint of a little unobtrusive impudence. Before daylight on the morning of the 27th I struck down into Villanteneuse, the outposts of which may be called quite close to St. Denis, and found there an officer of my acquaintance belonging to the "Lady-birds." He laughed my desire to scorn, and his arguments, and others which were even more patent, convinced me how premature and how futile would be any attempt of the kind. So I returned to Margency, and rode to Versailles instead. All along the road there was silence, although I was told that Valérien had fired heavily on the previous night, and that there had been

firing that morning. The terrace of St. Germain was totally deserted; the first time during the siege I had ever seen it without its groups of gossiping spectators. Versailles was in a state of bewilderment, and, except the astutest, who hardened their hearts and refused to believe anything at all, the dwellers therein were wholly given over to the dominion of chameleon-like canards of the greatest magnitude and the strangest versatility. From one reliable source I learnt that there certainly had been heavy firing in the direction of Sèvres in the morning. Then came one who boldly affirmed that Paris was open. He had not been in himself, nor had he seen anybody who had come thence, but he had the fact on undeniable authority. A little later it was communicated unto me, with much attention to detail, that the capitulation would be signed at four o'clock to a minute, and that the terms were very favourable for Paris. Another report was that there had been a revolution on the previous day when Jules Favre went back into Paris, and that he would on no account be allowed to come out again any more. But the *raconteur* of this collapsed when another interlocutor struck in with the positive assurance that M. Favre with two secretaries, and General Beaufort with two aides, had really come out that morning, and that the former was even then in close consultation with Bismarck. "They have been drinking champagne together," added another, as confidently as if he had helped to finish the bottle. Then came details as to the character of the negociations. It seemed that M. Favre had come out intending to ask terms for the city only, leaving the forts to be dealt with separately. Of this Bismarck would not hear; and, on the other hand, refused to accede to a surrender of Paris as a fortress apart from negociations for a general cessation of hostilities. He was, in fact, making the

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misery of Paris the stick with which to beat France into yielding to her fate. M. Favre had represented what hard lines these were, and ultimately Bismarck had withdrawn this as an absolute postulate, on the understanding that the former was to use his best exertions with the other members of the Provisional Government to bring about the desired end. On this understanding he had gone into Paris, and returned to Versailles that morning, bringing with him General Beaufort, as the affair was the capitulation of a fortress, and therefore to be arranged by the military authorities. All this was explained with a detail that might have been expected had one been amanuensis to Count Bismarck, without any pledge to secrecy. "Then how about to-day's doings?" I asked. "Oh, I can tell you that too. The hitch is about Mont Valérien. It seems some 20,000 die-hards are determined to get up into that keep and hold out for a spell longer, and that the Germans are aware of this, and will not listen to any other arrangement except all or none. There is no regular armistice, but a cessation of hostilities up to six o'clock," and more detail equally reliable. That there was no firing for a number of hours, till six, is certain. Six came, and with it the information that the time for the suspension of the firing had been extended till nine. Men must dine, even in a state of excited suspense; for my part I always find such sensation stimulate appetite. Judging by appearances, the second "Staffel" in the Hôtel des Réservoirs did not find the edge of its hunger in the least taken off by sensational reports, and the bear-garden-like Babel was rather more noisy than usual. The *Moniteur Officiel* came out earlier than usual by a couple of hours, but was so great a sell, that one, I think, would have been justified in demanding his money back. "Nothing new before Paris." Thus

curtly was the situation dealt with in the official print. An obese colonel was civil enough to announce to us, as he left the dining-room, that negociations had been "broken off" for the night; and then nine o'clock came. It had hardly finished striking, when one side or the other began to fire, and between nine and eleven several reports of big guns were quite audible. I believe there was silence during the night; and on the morning of the 28th there certainly was no renewal of the firing. I quitted Versailles too early to hear any further intelligence; and as I rode to St. Germain met great droves of lean cows, driven by Frenchmen, and frequent carts laden with calves. All these were for Paris; the people had heard of the *pourparlers*, and had rather taken time by the forelock.

At nine o'clock on the evening of the 28th, while the head-quarter staff of the Maas Army were assembled in the drawing-rooms of the Crown Prince's château after dinner, an orderly brought in a telegram to the Crown Prince. His Royal Highness, having read it, handed it to General von Schlotheim, the chief of the staff. That officer perused it in his turn, and then rising, walked to the door communicating between the billiard-room and the saloon, and there read the telegram aloud. It was from the Emperor, and it announced that two hours before Count Bismarck and M. Jules Favre had set their hands to a convention in terms of which an armistice to last for twenty-one days had already come into effect. It was not easy to settle down to cards or billiards after news like that.

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PART IV.

THE CONQUERED AND THE CONQUERORS.

CHAPTER I.

The Conquered.

AT three o'clock on the morning of the 29th there came to Margency Major Krause from Versailles, with the detailed terms of the armistice and of the capitulation of the forts. No time was suffered to run to waste. In the early morning Major von Welck, of the Maas Army staff, rode into St. Denis to arrange with the commandant the details for the surrender of the surrounding forts. At ten a.m. the Crown Prince of Saxony and his staff were in the saddle, and the soldiers who had thronged into the street greeted his Royal Highness with hearty cheering as they set out for St. Denis. When we got to the outpost village of La Barre there was a halt, which turned out to be a long halt. Welck had not returned; the commandant (Admiral La Roncière) was understood to be sulky and impracticable, and the aspect of the French troops was threatening. While the staff waited, a rough lunch was eaten in a ruined house, for the delay was for hours. At last the Major returned, but not with tidings that all was settled. There was a hitch about something concerning which it was necessary to consult General Schlotheim. The Prince and his two officers went out into the battery at the back of the house and held an earnest conversation. Then von Welck went back, accompanied by Lieutenant von Hinüber, the latter to bring back word when all was settled.

Meanwhile the Crown Prince and his staff waited on still. A strong body of troops was marched forward in

anticipation. The whole of the Ludwig Franz Regiment and of the 27th, and four field batteries of the 4th Army Corps, pushed on and halted on a little slope midway between St. Denis and Enghien. Before this a staff of engineer officers had gone forward into the fort, accompanied by a detachment, to draw the charges from the mines, and two companies of siege artillery were sent on to take over the guns and magazines.

It was now nearly three o'clock, and, although von Welck had neither sent nor come back, the Prince started. Von Welck met him at the half-way house, and reported a conversation with the representative officer of the French Etat Major, who had explained that the troops had not all evacuated St. Denis, and that the population, most of which was armed, looked somewhat threatening. He had therefore counselled a strong body of occupation. Welck and Hinüber had themselves been unmolested; but testified to there having been much disorder, which, however, was gradually dying out, as the inevitable came to be accepted.

We rode on, with La Briche close on the right; looking from the outside, it was not very seriously damaged in essentials. Its glacis was furrowed with shells as with a plough, the massive stonework of its scarp was pitted all over, and in places the coping stones had been dislodged. The earthen ramp was rather cavernous, especially about the angles; but there were no signs of anything that the wildest imagination could construe into a practicable breach. There were only two embrasures extant on one of the bastions; these from their appearance had evidently required repeatedly making good. Guns showed through these. All the other embrasures had been bunged up roughly, but seemingly effectually, with fascines, &c. obviously a reason of the

adoption of the system of overbank firing. There were the muzzles of guns visible sticking up over the parapet. Bending to the east we crossed the railway, and with another bend came to the northern entrance to Fort Du Nord. This fort had been served worse than La Briche. Its glacis was one series of shell pits. That, it is true, was nothing but evidence that many shells had fallen short. But great pieces of the earthwork were torn away, and the wall of the scarp had been shattered and penetrated in places. Here, too, the few embrasures left had been made good, but there was noticeable a paucity of guns. A terrible fire had converged on the gate; one drawbridge was demolished, the other could not be raised. It struck me that in both forts the defences flanking the gates and intended to sweep the approaches at what are always weak points, were insufficiently provided for. Just inside the works and covering the gate there was a halt amidst a mass of German officers and soldiers. This was to permit the delegate from the Etat Major to make some explanations. He came forward—a wan, sad-faced young officer of Marine Artillery, with a grave dignity in the pale face and weary anxious eyes, that commanded respect and commiseration. He was quite alone, not even an orderly with him, and the solitary man looked forlorn, yet full of a certain gallant pride, as he rode up to the Crown Prince with a high-bred greeting that was not, assuredly, of Republican France. His statement was that all the troops had evacuated St. Denis and gone into Paris; that the Mobiles, National Guard and Sedentaries who remained had been disarmed; and that the population had come to its senses. The whole of the supporting force being reported close up, the band of the 27th struck up the Paris March, and before it the staff, headed by the Crown Prince, marched up the principal

street, which was much cumbered with barricades, and embarrassed by the conductors of undrawn mines, laid down among gravel heaps in the road. The houses were shattered into fragments as far as the great square before the Caserne. The whole town was a ruin. Civilians swarmed on the side walks, men, women, and children; none looking very like starvation. It seemed to me that all the males over fourteen were in such uniform as a pair of red trouser stripes represented. There was a strange un-French silence, lowering brows, and many a *Sacré* muttered between the teeth. That all the arms had not been given up was very apparent. The staff had quite an escort of chassepot-carrying individuals on the side walks, not indeed of a very martial appearance, and probably on their way to the depôt for the reception of the firearms. It might have been the sight of the weapons which prompted General Schlotheim, when the staff was about half-way to the square, to order to the front the detachment of Saxon Cuirassiers of the Guard which formed the Crown Prince's escort. As the splendid horsemen clattered forward at a furious gallop, the women and children ran shrieking into the battered houses, "The Uhlans!" "The Uhlans!" In the square before the great barrack the Prince halted, wheeled on one side, and the 14th Brigade of the 4th Army Corps, the brigade that was detailed to garrison St. Denis, marched past him, their bands playing the "Paris March" and "Ich bin ein Preusse." Crowds of the French witnessed the sight, and I could hear them gloomily owning to one another their admiration of the physique and soldierly bearing of the German troops. The interim Governor of St. Denis was Brigadier-General Zychlinski. Before we quitted it the provision-sellers were already crowding into the place. The German forepost line was before

nightfall established all round 500 yards nearer Paris than the forts, and nobody was allowed to pass without a special permission. Strong patrols of occupation, composed of the first troops that entered the place, were at once marched into the forts. The Commandant of Fort de l'Est reported that there had fallen in it during one day of the bombardment no fewer than 1,200 shells. Prince George duly reported his successful occupation of the Eastern Forts.

When I rode into St. Denis on the forenoon of the 30th I found that it had in a measure recovered its tone since our hurried visit of the day before. It was true that it was as squalid and forlorn as then; that the men still clung to the red stripe on the trousers and the number on their cap, which with their wooden shoes and generally unwarlike *tout ensemble* rendered them somewhat incongruous-looking beings; but the shops had got their shutters down; the Germans had got themselves billeted; and the marketenders and provision-sellers were ready to present facilities to avert the imminence of starvation. One had to study the place with some care to comprehend thoroughly how devastating had been the nature of the bombardment. After passing the second big barricade, the houses on either side of the principal street had been spared by some casual luck, and I began to think that I had come through the zone of ruin, and had emerged into a territory comparatively unharmed. The aspect of the great barrack tended a good deal to undeceive me. A little farther on and I was again in the thick of the prints made by the bombs. The theatre had had its front utterly wrecked; through the great gaps you could see the painting on the roof and on the pillars flanking the stage. Turning off to the left I made in haste for the venerable cathedral, to discover what amount

of damage it had sustained. The republicans who had painted *Liberté*, *Egalité*, *Fraternité* on its portals, had not allowed their republicanism to render them negligent of the historical monuments the edifice contains; all round it had been banked up high with sand-bags, which had caught and stopped several shells. The stained glass was intact, or all but intact. Only four shells had penetrated to the interior of the building. One of the elaborately carved crosses on the top of a buttress had been splintered off, and a coping stone had been shattered; this, I think, summed up the evil done to the cathedral by the shells of the enemy. The splendid carving on the arches around the great door had not been harmed in the least, although it must have had some very narrow escapes. Several houses in the neighbourhood had been utterly demolished, and others fired. The aspect of the cathedral inside was very strange; the tombs of the kings had all been protected by sand-bags; the interior might have been called one great sand-bag. The statues had been covered in with wooden frames, and the sand-bags laid over them. It is pleasant to be able to state that never a statue had so much as a nose knocked off. In fact, considering the weight and duration of the bombardment, the cathedral may be said to have escaped wonderfully well. The same cannot be said of the new church of St. Denis, which is just behind Fort La Briche. Its steeple was wrecked; its north side was stove in; and its interior was a chaos of mortar, stones, and smashed paraphernalia. The little Protestant chapel, however, had suffered worse than any other religious edifice in the place. One might almost fancy its pasteur trotting dolefully about picking up the pieces of his church from the open spaces in the vicinity. The pulpit and the door were intact; as for the rest, if you had had all

the bits collected, it would have been worse than any Chinese puzzle to put them together again. The two Protestant schoolrooms escaped the bombardment, with the exception of having the windows broken; but in the morning the German soldiers, hungry after wood, had made a raid upon the desks and forms. Pasteur Saglier thought it hard that when there were plenty of Roman Catholic combustibles about the place, Protestants should burn the furniture of the only Evangelical establishment in the town; so he had paid a visit of remonstrance to General Zychlinski, who sent his chaplain to exorcise the evil spirits that were troubling the Evangelical woodwork.

It must have been verily the reign of the Prince of the Power of Darkness, that period of five days during which the bombardment lasted. While the shells were crashing into the houses, they were ploughing up the streets as with the deepest subsoil plough ever invented. There was no safety for any but in the cold and dark cellars; so heavy were the projectiles, that not always in the cellars was there found safety. There were houses of which garrets and cellars had been battered into a shapeless pile of stone and mortar. If you asked the loafing bystanders whether any had been buried in the ruins, they moodily muttered, "Qui sait?" shrugged their shoulders, and turned away. For myself, I think there must have been not a few underneath these jagged monumental piles; but there was nobody who has interest or energy to explore, and "Qui sait" might have been painted up as the vague epitaph.

Before the commencement of the siege, the garrison of each of the St. Denis forts had consisted of three artillerymen, a commandant, and a few military tailors and shoemakers. When the siege began, St. Denis did not share greatly in the tremors of her big sister; she was

girt by her forts, and she believed in them. Admiral La Roncière was appointed to the command, and sailors and artillerymen came and manned the forts. The population of St. Denis is peculiar. Its manufactures are insalubrious, and it has the unenviable attribute of attracting all the worst workmen from other parts of France, who can earn wages in St. Denis when they would be laughed out of factories elsewhere. So it is a chronically poor, shiftless, drunken place, with a population so floating that of the 30,000 the census gives it, it is reported to change 15,000 every year. In the early months of the siege St. Denis was tolerably quiet. Food gradually got dearer. The people came to horseflesh about two months before the surrender, and to reduced bread rations ten days before it. The world is familiar with the diet-throes of Paris—those of St. Denis had been similar but more intense, because of the prevalent poverty of the inhabitants. All the males had become "soldiers," and earned their franc and a half a day; which, as well as the 75 centime allowance for their wives, most drank with regularity and thoroughness. The wives and families, therefore, starved after they had eaten everything on which money could be raised. There had been in the place two ambulances, one a branch of the International, another a military ambulance. The bombardment had come on the town like a thunder-clap. The corporation were fiercely abused for not having given warning, which it was alleged it was in their power to do. Whether this was the case I do not know, and as far as the corporation goes it mattered very little, for its members all ran away when the bombardment commenced. Nobody had any responsibility; with a few noble exceptions, nobody had troubled himself except about the wholeness of his own skin. The Admiral Com-

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mandant concerned himself with his forts—the people might go hang for him. The members of the International Ambulance accepted the situation; took their lives in their hands, and went out to do what good they might. They dragged the maimed and shattered out of the ruined houses; they collected the corpses from the streets and the ruins, and buried them with some semblance of decency. They went round the town urging on the people that the women and children should go forth from the doomed town, and retire into Paris. The women and children had been huddled into the semi-security of the cellars. The shells were crashing into the streets, and avalanches of stone and brick were ever crashing upon the side-walks. The women peeping forth shudderingly declared that they would rather die where they were than incur a more certain and fearful death by sallying forth in that iron tempest. So they turned into the dank caverns to hunger and cold, and cuddling their children to their bosoms, utterly refused to budge. The Pasteur Saglier had gone to the Commandant and begged that he would allow him to go out as a parlementaire to the Germans, to ask for two hours' cessation of the bombardment, to give the women and children a chance to get away without being struck down as they went. The Admiral refused, and the ruthless devilry went on. Then the Pasteur sent an appeal to the Paris journals, begging all who possessed means of conveyance to send them into St. Denis to remove the perishing women and children. The response was but weak, and there appeared not a solitary representative of those ambulances whose members took delight in flags, and gave themselves to the vanities of buttons and uniforms. About half-a-dozen private vehicles turned up, and with the help of these the sick and wounded were got out of the hospitals in the

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town, and located in two large factories on the plain between St. Denis and Paris. Then children followed, and women great with child such as cared to go, till the plain-houses became like caravanserais. Meanwhile the few vehicles belonging to this ambulance were toiling assiduously in conveying to the rear the wounded struck down at the guns; a few men, and a few only, so far as I could learn, toiling with a zeal and energy that merited better support. As for the bold National Guards, their location was the wine shop. Therein they imbibed the courage that prevented them from creeping into the cellars; and when their cups had made them reckless, they sallied out into the streets, only to give the ambulance more trouble with their worthless carcases. Not a few were killed as they staggered about; others were brought to the ambulance, wounded, indeed, but as drunk as lords.

After a lengthened and searching peregrination of St. Denis, I accompanied two German officers in a ride beyond the foreposts toward the gate of La Chapelle. In the course of the day the restrictions to passing out had been materially relaxed, and the Avenue de Paris was thronged with Parisians. It seemed to me that if they could get out I might get in, and quitting my friends I rode forward toward the gate. Before going on a duty that seems likely to be hazardous, the wise soldier overhauls his weapons, looks that his sword is easy in the scabbard, and that his revolver is duly capped. I was no soldier and carried no lethal weapons; but before risking an entry into Paris, it seemed advisable to make sure that I had the important document with me which vouched for my being a British subject and a neutral. Alas, not anticipating the occurrence of such an opportunity I had left my passport behind, and

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there was nothing for it but to postpone my "invasion" of Paris until the morrow. On my way back to Margency, I must have met at least a third of the population of St. Denis returning from the fields in the plain, with barrow loads and armfuls of frosted half-rotten green stuff.

Next morning, that of the 31st of January, I left Margency better armed as to passports. Before essaying an entry into Paris,* I spent some time in investigating the condition of the St. Denis forts. Let me briefly describe the armament and condition of Fort la Briche. Its guns consisted mainly of long twelve and sixteen pounder muzzle-loaders, smooth-bores, and bearing dates from 1826 to 1841; and smooth-bore howitzers of antiquated construction. In each section of the banquette there was a gun and a howitzer. In most cases the ammunition by the guns was round, solid cannon-ball; the shells seemed to have been exhausted. It was interesting to notice how stress of events had driven the French from the embrasure to the overbank system, which is invariably used by the Germans. There were in La Briche fronting embrasures only the two guns I had

* I casually learnt since returning to England, there had been some controversy who was entitled to claim the priority of entrance into Paris. The matter is a bagatelle, but it seems fair that justice should be done. When I got in on the 31st, I went first to the American legation and afterwards to the British Embassy. At neither place had anything been seen of any prior correspondent. In the evening I visited a café, where I found the intra-Paris correspondents of the *Times*, *Daily News*, *Daily Telegraph*, and *Morning Advertiser*, none of whom had seen anyone from the outside before me. It was not until at least a fortnight after, that General Duff assured me of his own knowledge, that Mr. Coningsby, the representative, I believe, of the *Echo*, had entered Paris on the 29th. I have since had no communication with anyone who was personally cognisant of the circumstances, but of course General Duff's assurance sufficed to satisfy me of Mr. Coningsby's priority, which I now most cheerfully acknowledge. There is another aspect to the question. Of course, neither Mr. Coningsby nor I entered Paris as a mere personal adventure, but with a single eye to furnish the newspapers we respectively represented with the earliest possible tidings of the internal condition of the capital. To win a battle is one thing; to utilise promptly the victory is another.

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noticed on the day of our first entrance. The other embrasures had been filled up, and the guns moved aside behind to overbank protections. Several, notwithstanding the change, had been dismounted. Still the fort, judging by such evidences of really serious damage, might, to all appearance, have held out longer; nothing was apparent to have made it untenable. The centre yard was full of pits for negativing explosions. No actual casemate had been penetrated. But my belief is, that there were not casemates enough for a sufficient garrison. Around the detached bombproofs in the area the blindages had been utilised as barrack-rooms, and protected on the roof with sand-bags, but the sides were left unprotected in a similar manner, and the erections were simply smashed into tinder. The barracks in the yard were both shattered and partially burnt. Perhaps Admiral La Roncière, taking everything into consideration, was justified in notifying that he could not face the enemy with guns and men two days longer.

In the hurry of evacuation the French had left in a casemate a quantity of biscuit and cognac, which the German troops were philosophically enjoying, as I went round. They wanted something to harden their stomachs before setting about cleansing the casemates, which were like hogsties. Cleanliness could not well have been insisted on under the circumstances.

Leaving St. Denis about two o'clock, I rode through the Prussian foreposts on to the neutral ground in company with two cuirassier officers, who turned back when we had got about two hundred paces up the Avenue de Paris. Had I accepted the well-intentioned advice of friends, I certainly would not have adventured on the expedition on which I was bound. A cool customer had such t his servant in the morning for a great-coat I had

promised him when the war was over; his selfish reasoning being that the war was virtually over as regarded me, since, if I persisted in going into Paris, nobody would ever hear of me more than fragmentarily. The two cuirassier officers who rode with me into the neutral territory took leave of me quite pathetically, and when I said, "Au revoir," one of them shook his head significantly. It was rather nervous work riding along a road crowded with Frenchmen, not a friendly German uniform within sight, and one's self so dressed as to be easily enough mistaken for one of the hated race. The Porte de la Chapelle was closed and the drawbridge up, while sentries marched up and down inside the closed gates of the palisading. Nobody knew when the gates would open, but there was a general anticipation that they would open some time. I waited for a full half-hour, while a dense crowd collected with the desire to get inside, with whom I and my horse were the chief topics of observation. Men laid their heads together and discussed my personality. I was a Prussian, that was taken for granted. Had I countless cattle in reserve? or had I come to have speech with the authorities as to the further humiliation of Paris? I got into conversation in English with a man who had been in America, but this had no effect in leading my critics to suppose I was an Englishman. "These Prussians, *sacré*, they know every language under the sun;" sententiously remarked an elderly gentleman with a big cabbage under each arm, and a pair of red stripes down his legs. My horse shared with me the public interest. But it was not the interest usually attracted towards horses. There was no criticism as to her points, her probable action, or her soundness. No, "she was a fine fat animal; she must be succulent; how well she would eat; what would I

not give for a slice of her?" When I saw a gentleman in a blouse produce a big knife in dangerous proximity to the mare, I had serious apprehensions that he was going to help himself to a buttock steak. It was very curious how horseflesh had come to be accepted as an ordinary viand, not to be noted as anything out of the common. On the previous day, when I had called on M. Saglier, the good pasteur of St. Denis, he hospitably asked me to have some dinner. I assenting, he told his servant to "bring in the meat," and I made an assault with vigour and perseverance on a rather ragged roast joint which was placed before me, the pastor looking on benignantly the while. I held my tongue till the edge was off my appetite, and then asked the minister what I was eating. "Well," said he, "of course you are eating horse, and a very choice joint it is. I knew the animal well. He was young and plump, and of a grey colour, which it is well known indicates tenderness." The pastor had been eating horse for the last four months; not because he was forced to do so so long, but because he had a numerous dependency of poor people, to aid whom he had to practise economy.

After waiting half-an-hour outside the barred La Chapelle gate, an officer appeared, and exclaimed, "A la Porte de St. Ouen." St. Ouen (or Clingiancourt) is the next gate to La Chapelle on the north, and we all therefore made to the right, I being mounted beating the others, who were all on foot. This gate was open, and a gendarme examining passes. I rode on slowly, looking straight between my horse's ears, and somehow nobody stopped me. When I had got just inside the gate I thought for certain my career was to be cut short. The Northern Railway runs close by the inside of the enceinte, such that when I reached the bridge an officer came forward with

his hand raised. As luck would have it, a train came puffing past at the moment. My mare thought proper to go through a variety of fantastic gymnastic feats at this apparition, the officer looking on admiringly. When the train had passed, and she had condescended to come down upon all fours again, the officer smiled and patted her shoulder. I smiled and raised my hat, and somehow I had slidden over the bridge before he had got the buck-jumping idea out of his head and the interception idea into it. As I rode down the Boulevard Ornano, I came upon sundry groups of half-drunk National Guards. One of these, as I passed him, raised the shout, "A bas le Prussien!" further flattering me by calling me "cochon," and "assassin." Others took up the cry, and matters were getting serious. The clamour was spreading, and men tried to clutch hold of my bridle. I judged boldness to be the wisest policy, so facing about, I pushed up to the first man who had shouted, and proclaiming that I was an Englishman come to do good if possible—not harm—I reproached my denouncer for interfering with a harmless and peaceable wayfarer. The demon of cowardly and venomous suspicions had not yet been developed. Ten or twenty days after, in such a dilemma, I should have thought myself lucky to have got clear off after being marched back to the guard-house, half-a-dozen men at each bridle rein, as many more at each leg, and forced to exhibit my passport to the officer on duty. But hunger is a wonderful agent in making men mind their own business, and in keeping truculence in a dormant state. I cannot say, even after I had passed successfully the good fellow who had assailed me with the cries of "cochon," that I liked the appearance of the Boulevard Magenta. It was densely crowded with soldiers, and some of them might be disagreeably patriotic. But

no, they were all too much busied with their own affairs, getting their pay and discussing events. The closed shops appeared to me to be chiefly eating-houses; all the other shops appeared to be open, although there did not seem to be any trade doing. The bouillon, houses, however, at the street corners, were open, and I afterwards gathered that Duval had had exceptional advantages extended to him.

Halting to go into a shop to make an inquiry—I was not acquainted with the geography of Paris—I called a soldier of the line who was strolling on the pavement to hold my horse. On coming out I had a little talk with him. Yes, he had had enough of it—*Sacré*. They had nearly killed him, these terrible Prussians, and he was very hungry. When would the gates open for food? When I put my hand in my pocket to find something to tip him wherewithal, I discovered that I had no other but Prussian money. Forgetting for the instant the situation, I asked him whether he could do anything with a ten-groschen piece. Bless you;—it was silver, and might have had the devil's pitchfork stamped upon it instead of the split crow, for all that the hungry linesman cared. Three weeks after it was not wise to carry, much less to show, German money.

"Paris is utterly cowed; fairly beaten"—so said the first Englishman I met; and his opinion was mine. Yet Paris was orderly and decent, and with a certain solemn morose self-restraint mastering the tendency to demonstrate. The streets were crowded, almost wholly with men in uniform. Civilians were few and far between. Many shops were open, but many also were closed. There was no want of hardware in Paris. You might have bought enough and to spare of anything except edibles. Drink was plentiful enough, but except near

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the gate I saw not a soul drunk. The food shops had nothing to show. There were confitures and preserves, jellies, &c.; but solid comestibles were conspicuous by their absence. In one shop I saw several large shapes of stuff that looked like lard. When I asked what it was, I found it was horse fat. The bakers' shops were closed: the grating down before the butchers'. And oh, the number of funerals! One, two, three; I met six altogether in the course of my ride. Sad with an exceeding great sadness; such was what I found as regards Paris long before I reached the American Legation; self-respecting, too, in her misery; not blatant; not disposed to collect in jabbering crowds. Each man went his way with chastened face and listless gait.

After visiting the American Legation, where undisguised wonder was expressed at my appearance, I made my way to the Hôtel de St. Honoré, to an old-fashioned and well-known house kept by a worthy Briton of the name of Unthank. I had nearly filled my wallet with newspapers, and had only stowed away, for an exigency, a few slices of ham. Did ever the rarest geological or mineralogical specimen make such a sensation as these slices of ham? When I reached my quarters the servant women asked permission to take the meagre plateful out, and show it as a curiosity to their companions; and after the ham was eaten, stray visitors came in, attracted by the tidings, and begged for a look at the unwonted viands. Mr. Unthank had had for his boarder throughout the siege Dr. Gordon, our medical commissioner in Paris, and he took pride in asserting, that the doctor, under his auspices, had lived as well as any other man in Paris. When dinner came it bore out Mr. Unthank's boast. Positively there was a fowl—pretty well, I reckon, the last fowl in Paris. Mr. Unthank had been offered

eighty francs for the biped while yet it had its feathers on, but refused it, and so we had him for dinner with my ham as an accompaniment, only I stood out of participation in the ham, that the rarity might go the further with the others. There are advantages in being a Scotsman. One of these this siege had developed in a curious way. There was some store of oatmeal in Paris. You can make porridge out of oatmeal; and Scotsmen not only eat, but enjoy porridge. Thus Dr. Gordon, a Strathdon man, had supped his frugal bicker of porridge every morning, while men not born to the manner of porridge were giving themselves internal uneasiness by eating the stuff which bears the conventional name of bread. Sharing the origin of Dr. Gordon, I shared with him his bicker of porridge, and when I had scraped the dish, came to the conclusion that the man who cannot sup porridge deserves to starve. Yet another national dainty was Unthank equal to—a tumbler of such Scotch whisky toddy as I had not tasted for months.

In the evening, after paying my respects to a coterie of newspaper correspondents who had been trying to dine at the Café Gaillot, in the Rue Neuve St. Augustine, I there looked in on a party that had been experimenting in dining. They had eaten ostrich, cat, dog, rat, and mice. This seemed to me a hard-hearted mode of extracting a new sensation out of the pinch of the times. Far better to have dined on horse, and given the fancy price of more dainty viands,—is it not justifiable to estimate the daintiness of a dish by its cost?—to put bread into the mouths of the poor suffering women and children. For two days neither bread nor meat had been distributed in the 8th arrondissement. Those who had no money simply had to hunger. The sins for which Paris had used to be famous, seemed all to belong to the past.

She had been half-starved, half-beaten into morality, or it might have been, I ventured to speculate, that other than physical influences had led her to wash and be clean. I saw some drunkenness, but far less than I had looked for among men whose clock, so to speak, had run down. A decent gloom was everywhere apparent. Some asserted that the gloom was as much theatrical and assumed as had been the previous valorous seeming. I tried not to think so—I fain thought that I could see the iron eating and burning into the hearts of those men—silent with unwonted silence; moody as they had never known how to be before; and as the downcast faces passed, I drew with a mistaken sanguineness for which I do not now reproach myself, a good augury from them for France and Paris.

The great and beautiful feature of the siege had been the absence of crime. No murders, no robberies, no social crimes, but a virtue in which, to me at least, there was something pathetic. I had intended to promenade Paris all night, to make the most of the time necessarily limited. But before ten o'clock the promenade had become almost a solitary one. By nine the dim lights were put out in the kiosks, and the petroleum was waning in the street lamps. By half-past the cafés were putting up their shutters; the red-striped waiters looking curiously nondescript. By ten the world of Paris was left to darkness and to me, and so I went to bed. The midnight air was not tortured by the sound of revellers, although there were no police to keep order. I woke up between twelve and one in the night, and the silence made me for the moment think myself back at Margency.

The whole city was haunted by the peculiar half-sweetish, half-fœtid odour which horseflesh gives out in cooking; an odour which I had learned to appreciate at

Metz. It permeated the deserted British Embassy, where, asserting my privileges as a Briton, I stabled my horse; it lingered in the corridors of the Grand Hotel, and fought with the taint from wounds in evil case. The Grand Hotel was one huge hospital. Half Paris seemed converted into hospitals, if one might judge by the flags. There had been more than were needed until the Southern bombardment began; and then when the hospitals, ambulances, orphanages, and madhouses on the South side had to be evacuated, there had been quite a squeeze on this side of the water. Very touching was the ignorance everywhere as to the outside world. "I have seen three English papers since September," said Dr. Gordon, our Medical Commissioner. "Is Ireland quiet? Is Mr. Gladstone still Prime Minister? Is the Princess Louise married?" Such were samples of the questions I had to answer. The ignorance as to the condition of the Prussians outside was equally dense. The day after negotiations began, Paris had been assured that the investing army had not eaten for three days; and that it was Paris which was granting terms rather than the other way. I was continually asked if the Prussians had not been half-starved all through? What they had done for quarters? Whether there were not 400,000 at the very least surrounding Paris? Whether they did not tremble in their boots at the name of the Francs-tireurs? Whether they were not half-devoured by vermin? Whether the king still resided in Versailles, they had not heard of his being emperor? and so on.

The pinch for food was worse than ever, pending the result of the negotiations for its supply. The day before but one the hungry populace had broken into the reserved store of potted provisions in the Halle, smashed all obstacles, and looted the place. From one who had

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paid the prices himself, and had the figures down in black and white without exaggeration, I got the following list:—2 francs for a small shrivelled cabbage; 1 franc for a leek; 45 franks for a fowl; 45 francs for a rabbit (which may be taken for granted as cat); 25 francs for a pigeon; 22 francs for a 2lb. chub; 14 francs per pound for stickleback; 2 francs per pound for potatoes; 40 francs per pound for butter; cheese, 25 francs a pound, when procurable. Meat other than horseflesh was absolutely not to be procured. I was assured that if I offered 50*l.* down in bright shining gold for a veritable beefsteak, I should have no claimant for the money! The last cow that had changed hands was for the use of an ambulance, and had fetched 80*l.* Those that were still left could not be bought for money. The bread was abominably bad, something between putty and chopped straw, bound together with farina starch; but its badness was not the worst thing about it, that was the difficulty to get it at all. Gentle and simple had to wait their turn outside the bakers' shops, and the same outside the butchers'. I saw huge throngs at both as I rode through Paris, chiefly women, waiting in silent shivering in the cold.

The trees on the Boulevards had suffered less than I had been given to expect. In the Champs Elysées likewise, there was little perceptible injury, but the gardens of the Tuileries, in which wooden barracks had been erected nearly all the length of the Rue Rivoli, had not escaped quite so well. The scarcity of wood was terrible in the latter days. People could not get their washing done for lack of wood to heat the copper. So far as I could gather the moral effect of the bombardment on the population was terrible, although unacknowledged definitely. After the first day of defiance the Government had felt the pressure. M. Jules Simon told a friend of

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mine that the bombardment of St. Denis had shortened the siege by a week. Competent authorities estimated that Paris, had she been desperately obstinate, might have gone on for another fortnight or three weeks, had the pickles and preserves, and all the odds and ends now sold at exorbitant prices, been taken and rationed. Certainly, the supply of horseflesh was far from exhausted. It surprised me to see so many well-appointed vehicles still in the streets of Paris, with well-conditioned horses. Nor were the omnibuses either few or far between, and their horses were in the best of condition, as were the horses ridden at break-neck speed through the streets by officers who looked, and who probably were, transmogrified *petits crévés*.

I was inside Paris, but how was I to get out? It was clear I was no use there, quite *de trop* in fact. People who ought to know shook their heads. I must first get my passport viséd at the Embassy. Then I must go to the Prefecture of Police and get a permit, which would probably be refused, and then there was after all the Prussian lines to pass. I thought it wise to have the passport viséd, in case of accidents. Who could visé it? Oh, Mr. Blount, the banker, who had just been appointed British Consul. To Mr. Blount's I went. A respectable man told me that was the wrong shop, I must go to the Embassy and get my business done there. To the Embassy I went accordingly. A porter, mopping the stairs, was the sole representative visible of her Britannic Majesty. He sent me into a room, and presently a little man in slippers arrived, who told me he had been summoned from some cleaning operations upstairs, and was in a muddle. Inside his velveteen coat was concentrated the representation of ambassador, attaché, consul, and the British flag generally, including

the lion and the unicorn. He produced the seal, and had to spit on the unused wad to get juice enough for the impression. With much mental perturbation, arising from thick ink and a seemingly defective acquaintance with the art of penmanship, he succeeded in achieving my skeleton credentials, and then said I must go to Mr. Blount and get his signature attached. Rather a scrappy way of getting accredited as a free-born British Christian, I thought, especially when I thought of the big house and the bigger item in the estimates. However, I went to Mr. Bount, who was remarkably civil for a consul, and owned, with ingenuous candour, to an utter ignorance of his new duties. He knew enough, however, to attach his name in the vicinity of the imposing stamp, and then advised me to go to the Prefecture.

I had had enough of gyrating among officialism, and determined to chance it. Trotting down the Rue Rivoli I met Dr. Cormac, who, as head of the English ambulance, supported by Mr. Wallace, had been doing very good work. On my right the gardens of the Tuileries were sadly desecrated, ploughed up with innumerable hoof-prints of cattle, scored with tracks of provision waggons. Wooden barracks had been built where dainty flower-pots once were. The Place du Trône had its eastern end blocked by a gigantic barricade, erected, as I supposed, *pour passer le temps;* for it was impossible that it could have been of any use for defensive purposes. Once outside this, the Vincennes gate stood before me. I pulled up into a walk, and tried to look as if I were doing the most ordinary thing in the world. There was a cordon of soldiers across the narrow passage just inside the gate. One made a half motion for me to halt. I began to whistle, and looked the other way. He forsook his purpose. In another minute I was in the

broad road outside the Vincennes gate, and was in full trot through the suburb. A little beyond the fort I came to the forepost line of the Würtembergers, and chancing to meet an officer I knew, rode through without so much as being challenged.

Except her forts, her garrison, and her *enceinte*, it was curious to notice how much of an open camp Paris had been all through the siege. The forepost defence line of the French was hardly worth talking of as an obstruction. Here and there, it is true, it was formidable. Around the Château of Villanteneuse, for instance, there was a series of works which were of a regular fortress character, and of a construction which was creditable to those who had made them; but there they stood all alone, unsupported, as French soldiers as well as French works have been so often during this war. So the German patrols had been wont quietly to walk round these Villanteneuse works, and do their business on the further side, utterly negativing them. Non-continuity was the striking feature everywhere of the French line of defences. Fort Nogent, close on the right of which I passed in my ride, had not to all appearance suffered so much as the St. Denis forts; but I had not time to enter it and make a minute inspection. Up till the hour that I left Paris no provisions, otherwise than surreptitiously, had been introduced into Paris. The situation, indeed, until Colonel Wortley and Mr. Moore's prompt and prudential arrival, was hardly appreciably ameliorated as compared with the siege times.

Lagny I reached about six at night, and slept, or rather spent the night, in the guard-room, to ensure priority in the inevitable squeeze for seats in the only train for the frontier—a train leaving at the unholy hour of half-past four in the morning. All day long we jogged

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on, very slowly for a *Postzug*, through France, passed shattered Strassburg about midnight, and reached Carlsruhe about two in the morning. Hurrying to the telegraph office, I spent the hours there till ten in the morning, superintending the doings of two very pleasant young ladies who had the night shift at the wires, and was in the return train for the front at half-past two in the afternoon (the 3rd).

Owing to an accident to the rails I did not reach Lagny, on the return journey, till the afternoon of the 5th, to find that place (always crammed) now positively overwhelmed by the flood-tide of those who had quitted Paris. On the 6th I rode round the east and north from Lagny to Margency. Every road was thronged with the inhabitants of the country surrounding Paris, pouring out of the city in which they had so long been immured. I saw sad sights at every step; families gazing hopelessly at their shattered homes, or women timidly asking permission of the Germans to be allowed a corner in their own house wherein to shelter their children. I saw a French nobleman visiting his own château, asked as a guest by the German occupants to drink a glass of his own wine, and proffered a shakedown in one of his own bedrooms. I saw delicate ladies, with jewels on their fingers, grubbing in the fields for frosted vegetables; while the *bonne* stood in the road with the sobbing children, and the father mooned about picking up scraps of firewood to warm the damp hearth in the wrecked château. I saw the stupefied farmer gazing dreamily on the battery emplacements cumbering his fields, and at the shell craters behind them, as if the solid works were spectral apparitions, and would melt away and leave the easy furrows, if he only looked long enough. Faces passed me not good to look upon. Dark faces of French ladies in-

side carriages, with tightened muscles, and eyes flashing full of silent passion, as the German sentry stopped them in the ruined village, and in the rough Teuton manner demanded their papers. There were lurid faces of men, too, with knitted brows and suppressed angry despair working in each feature. Yet the picture had its other side, thanks to French adaptability and light-heartedness. A family finds its wine-shop empty, and the roof off. In a couple of hours things are patched up somewhat; the buried bottles are unearthed; and a brisk over-the-counter trade is going on. Another family turns up in an omnibus, with impedimenta, including an assortment of babies and green umbrellas, only to find its home tenanted by Saxon soldiers. Pack closer, is the order with the Teutons. Room is made for the new-comers. The corporal takes the baby while the mother tries what erbswurst soup is like; and the old household settles down into something marvellously like content.

Bad times no doubt those in the environs of Paris, when the starving beleagured came out to ruined homes and to grub for food in the fields; yet times not without some redeeming features. Separated families were reuniting, and the sight—albeit there was not a little pathos in it—was cheerful. My village of Andilly had received a great accession of kinsfolk—so much so, indeed, that it was not able to contain itself, but habitually held its coteries *al fresco* in the mud. When I had left for Paris a week before the Frenchman who, in Madame Sapey's absence, did me the honour to consider himself my most obedient humble servant, had neither wife nor child in his lodge; they were in the besieged city. When I came back there was a homely air about the place it had never worn before. The wife had come out, and brought the bairns with her. They were rather a pallid crew, but

merry with the joy of being back again. When one called there came a flaxen-haired child, with a "Plait-il, Monsieur?" instead of the unshorn porter, its father. When the sun came out the flaxen hair and her brothers and sisters fell a playing on the lawn. What a home-look the little ones gave this war-devastated region! They made it look so homely that one fell home-sick, and found himself craving wistfully after the sight of his own flaxen-haired ones.

For how many must it have been in those days a source of congratulation that the plain of Montmagny is a series of market-gardens! You have seen in winter weather a bevy of crows following the plough. Like this was the swarm of French, male and female, father and son, matron and child, that I saw spread over the fields, grubbing for the vegetables, as I rode toward St. Denis, on my way to Paris, on the 7th. Some went in strongly for onions: others for leeks, which they washed in the water by the roadside; others again with stick or iron spike turned over the potato drills to excavate the frosted tubers. Road and railway track were alike thronged ever with quiet yet seemingly cheerful journeyers. Cheerful, for they were already out of captivity, and as yet had not come upon the object of their visit in the shape of their homes. When this stage should have been reached I trow the blithe faces grew very long indeed. There is a time to be glad and a time to mourn. The *émigrés* were glad before they were warranted in being so; there was a bitter time of mourning in store for them. Ah! this life is very short! Too short, as I heard an utilitarian remark the other day for a wise man to smoke bad cigars. Too short also, it may be, for people to be sad before the inevitable time comes. If that strange, half-frivolous half philosophical French nonchalance permitted, why, in heaven's

name, should not these poor people be merry while they might? It is only Teutons and that nondescript amalgamation of the breeds of the universe which we call Anglo-Saxon, that pulls down the lower lip in anticipation.

It was a strange scene on the forepost line. The hour was about half-past five when I reached it. As I had understood, the nominal hour for closing intercommunication was six; but on the German side the living barricade in the shape of a cordon of soldiers had been put up at five instead of six. In consequence, a dense mass of disappointed people had accumulated, complaining bitterly. Behind the folks on foot were long lines of carriages, and the number was being continually added to. It was, indeed, an important question for many. They lived in St. Denis; they had no place to go to if they went back to Paris, and besides, by the time they could get back the Paris gates would be closed. Were they to pass the night on the plain? I thought the Germans were rather stern about the matter. Cavalrymen, with horses that reared imposingly, rode continually across the front in a succession of plunges, driving the people back as I have seen a troop of dragoons clear Dame Street, in Dublin, on "St. Patrick's day in the morning." On behalf of a gentleman in charge of an International Society's ambulance waggon, I appealed to the officer on duty; but "I have my instructions" was the response, which no one could challenge. One could not have got into Paris now without a permission. There was a regular and orderly system of examining passes, both on the German side, and by the French at the point where the road cuts into the glacis of the enceinte. There I found an officer who spoke both German and English, and who comically grumbled that his linguistic accomplishments seemed to doom him to permanence in his present posi-

tion. A trying position truly. Had I not already seen that everybody was trying to get out of Paris, I should have certainly said that everybody was trying to get into it. Verily civil was the polyglot officer, and I found myself inside La Chapelle ever so much sooner than I had anticipated.

"Why, they have got over it already!" Such was the remark I made to myself as I rode through Paris in the dusk—a Paris no more like the Paris I had seen a week before than is Niobe to a clown grinning through a horse-collar. Paris had in a great measure recovered her spirits, and with them her complacency. The general population looked no more as if all were lost. Groups formed and conversed—they even enlivened into gesticulation. The wineshops got up quite a creditable illumination, and they were the reverse of empty. But they were not so full as were the public soup-kitchens, from which as I rode past I reasoned that the contents of the twenty-seven trains that had come in full of British provisions could not have diffused themselves quite so widely as to bring plenty into every household; and there still were *cues* outside the bakers' shops, but there was something better to wait for than in the old days. True, the bread was still brown, but it was not like glue jam, starch, molasses, brown paper, bill-sticker's paste, and printer's ink, blocked together, as it had been the other day. There was in it a goodly proportion of wholesome British flour, and it was a toothsome morsel compared to the stuff that I had loathed the other day. There were many more shutters down from the shop fronts than on the occasion of my first visit. It was true there was not much food about yet, and prices were "famine," but still the look ahead was toward a harbour of plenty pretty soon, not to misery, cold, hunger, bomb-

shells, and despair. So Paris had got over the terrible twinge which the surrender gave her at first, and had owned to herself that things were looking up. "After all," I seemed to hear Paris say, "I do well to get rid of my moping humour, and to abjure my intention of jumping into the Seine and finding my way into the Morgue. It cut me very deeply, no doubt, to have to sign that convention, but only just think what I have braved, done, and suffered. You can't in common decency refuse to own that I am at least something of a heroine; that I have deserved well of my country and of my traditional reputation. Well, *vive la gloire;* I have the glory if I have not the success, so let me smooth my face and pluck up my spirits a bit, and go out for a walk on the Boulevards, and once more assert the tongue-gift I am endowed with." Who could blame Paris if she reasoned thus, providing only that her tongue-gift, her *gloire*, and her shortness of memory should not combine to make her fortgetful of the terrible ordeal she had gone through? Keep that memory fresh in the mind of Paris—if it is possible to keep any memory fresh in such a mind, or if, indeed, she knows the meaning of mental freshness—and you may be easy about any more war on the part of France that Paris can help. Even now, while the last act of the tragedy seemed thickening, and there was the possibility of a hitch and a postponement in the dropping of the courtain, Paris wanted peace at any price, and wished Gambetta dead. "No more fighting for us, thank you." I do not believe, if the war had continued in the South, that half a hundred Frenchmen would have quitted Paris to take part in it. Over the Mairie of La Chapelle hung a white flag as I passed, blazoned with the inscription, "La Patrie est en danger; Formation des compagnies de marche; Appel aux voluntaires."

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Bless you, it might have been a Hebrew text for all that anybody regarded it. The patrie and the marching regiments might go hang, if the provision trains would only come in fast enough into the Terminus du Nord. Their speedy advent was indeed still wanted badly. There had been no bread distributed the day before in the arrondissement of Passy, and a scant one in turbulent Belleville. Dr. Innes had seen to the temporary relief of the ambulances with a zeal and discretion that could not be too highly commended. That omnibus of his, which must have been like the wizard's inexhaustible hat, was talked about everywhere. How he pulled out of it first himself; then rabbits, turkeys, loaves, ham, vegetables, four sheep (I don't know if they were alive), and a quantity of little odds and ends, in the shape of chests of Liebig and other small deer! How he consorted with Dr. Gordon, and how the energetic pair bustled out the good things all round the ambulances—going the length, indeed, in their urgency, of requisitioning the carriage-horses of the Ambassador of a Foreign Power!

What a contrast to the months of March and April was February in Paris, especially the first half of the month! Electioneering was going on most of the time; but electioneering surely of a very quiet kind. I don't doubt that one, had he known where to look for it, might have found political excitement running high and waxing warm; but I confess I felt more interest in the hungry women and children than in politics. In indulging this interest I went about a good deal with Dr. Gordon, our military medical commissioner, a man who, while singularly modest and undemonstrative, was simply working like a horse to alleviate the distress of this great city. His knowledge, derived from a residence in Paris

during the siege, was now of the utmost value, and the circumstances called it almost continually into action. Our countrymen in Paris during the siege, although few in number, had no reason to be ashamed of their work. The expenditure of the British Charitable Fund for the last month had amounted to 18,000 francs, all contributed by British residents in Paris for the behoof of their poorer fellow-countrymen. Over 1,200 poverty-stricken British subjects were regularly fed by its machinery. There was another fund of a similar character, organised by the Rev. Dr. Smythe, for married women who themselves were English, although married to foreigners. Many of the husbands of these women had been serving as soldiers; the poor creatures had lost their own nationality, and therefore could not claim either for themselves or their children on the British Charitable Fund. Through this medium some thirty-five women and seventy-six children had been kept alive. This latter fund had also assisted a forlorn detachment of converted Jews, thrown over, of course, by the Jewish organisation. All those families, of which there were twenty-seven, were connected with England in some way or other.

Nobody could have been in Paris at this time a single day without hearing something of the noble work done by Mr. Richard Wallace during the siege. A rich man, he had not spared his wealth, nor had he spared personal exertions. At an expense of 12,000*l.* he had established an ambulance; he had paid down 2,000*l.* for the behoof of the victims of the bombardment; he had set up a hospital at his own expense; and another hospital for thirty patients he had established in his own house. The grateful people called him the Peabody of Paris. There are some practical people across the water

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in our happy little island. Mr. Wallace's name for charitable actions had been celebrated by Paris correspondents during the siege. Another victim, thought the astute begging-letter writers. The first letter that Mr. Wallace opened on the resumption of postal communications was a begging letter, asking for 50*l.* I am sorry to have to add that the enterprising correspondent failed in his laudable object. I much fear, however, after all, that the good work that was being done—the hearty genial work into which everybody seemed to enter with a pleasant zest—missed a very important class. I refer to those middle-class people, maiden ladies, widows with families, &c., ordinarily fairly well-to-do, but whose means of living the collapse of France had dried up. These people did not and would not come a-begging. They suffered: aye, good friends, and I fear they died of want, some of them, rather than expose the nakedness of the land. They were hard to get at. Much like the Scotch folk before the Poor Law régime, they had an honest pride, and they would, while they starved behind them, hang clean starched curtains at their windows. One deeply touching instance of privation among such people came to my knowledge. On the 9th a gentleman was distributing bread in a certain quarter of Paris. He had a slice in his pocket, scraps of which he was throwing to a dog. It startled him when a woman ran out of a doorway and begged him to give her for her child the bread he was throwing to the dog. She was a lady, God help her! the wife of a surgeon, who was in the south with the army, and her infants were starving. Take this fact home to ourselves—for that is the only way to get at the conception of the position. Just fancy a London doctor's wife begging a bit of bread from a stranger! You can't? No more can I; and yet here was the counter-

part of the incomprehensible. We could not persuade the doctor's wife, and such like people, to come to the places of distribution. We did not know where they lived. Delicate work this, not fit for rough men, however big their hearts, in great boots, with loud voices, and big beards; the work was women's work. We should have seen in Paris in those times some frank-faced British women with energy and discrimination, yet with soft voices and pleasant coaxing ways. They could have done what with the best will in the world men could not do.

So far as I could learn, the French surgeons in the early days of the siege, when the conditions were favourable, were earnest in the pursuit of conservative surgery. One of the leading advocates for this system had been Dr. Mosetig, of Vienna, attached to the International Society's organisation, and he had great success, especially in the early days of the siege. But as the siege progressed times changed. Circumstances became unfavourable to the recovery of wounded men under any surgical conditions; wards became impregnated from long use with hospital taint; rations were bad; the men were physically "bad subjects." True, it was possible still in some favoured lazarettes to pursue conservative surgery. There ventilation was good; patients were comparatively sparse; there was a large allowance of cubic space of air; and the attendants spared no pains to destroy any mysterious taint so noxious after operations. A most favourable example of a pattern lazarette was that kept up by Mr. Wallace, and supervised by Dr. Cormac, where the sanitary conditions were maintained in thorough efficiency with hardly any regard to expense. But all the receptacles for the wounded manifestly could not share this good fortune. There were crowded and long occupied wards, generating pyæmia, gangrene, and erysipelas;

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there were overworked orderlies; and there was food of a character inevitably tending to the impoverishment and vitiation of the blood. These conditions presented but a poor field for the successful practice of conservative surgery. Let me take two examples of conservative surgery, operations for success in which one of the most distinguished of our British surgeons, Sir William Fergusson, is justly celebrated. I refer to the excision of the knee and elbow joints, and the establishment of a juncture between the parts on either side of the excised joints. The value of such an operation successfully consummated is immense; and, under favourable conditions, with skill in the operator, a fair bodily condition in the patient, and sedulous after attention, such an operation is successful in most cases to a pitch of which our ancestors did not dream. But when the ward is malarious with those taints which poison raw flesh surfaces; when the patient is low in habit at the time of the operation, and good nourishment is not afterwards obtainable; and when the dressing and attendance are not scrupulously careful, it is obvious that the circumstances are altered. The surgeon has to consider the practicability of diminishing the risk to the lowest possible minimum. When he excises a joint and attempts a juncture, he has two flesh surfaces patent to the taint; the dressing is complicated and the demand on the vital energy that stimulates the healing power is probably larger. On the other hand, when he amputates he exposes but one surface, and the other risks are smaller in every way. It was by argument based on these facts that toward the end of the siege conservative surgery was gradually abandoned, except in very favoured localities. I fear the success of the operating surgeon had been in no case encouraging. It was hardly in the nature of things that it should have been

so. When scientific men give to the world the results of their surgical experience of the siege of Paris, the communication cannot fail to be interesting and instructive. From all that I can learn, matters would have been worse than they were, had not all the victualling, medical, and surgical arrangements been in professional hands, instead of being left to the Intendance. Probably in the history of modern organisations there is no greater instance of stupendous and abject failure than the French Intendance. If it failed miserably in its obligations to the fighting men, it is not to be thought that its functions would have been more efficiently performed in attending to the sick and wounded. This war has snuffed out the French Intendance. If there are any adaptations or copies of it in other countries, let their administrators take warning by the abject collapse of their pattern.

The Paris elections of representatives to the National Assembly were atrociously tame. There are few who do not know what election times are in England. Beer, roughs, placards, speeches, men in the gutter, couriers, hustings, the man in the moon, and so forth. If one had come to Paris thinking to see anything of this kind, I can imagine his utter disappointment. Where are the hustings? in my innocence I asked a fellow countryman more conversant than myself with the ways of the natives. That was on the polling day. He laughed in my face and turned away. I found out that there were no nominations save in print, and so there was no use for any hustings. An economical arrangement this to dispense with the hustings; but, then, how about the speeches and the show of hands? Where was the influential manufacturer and large employer of labour, who rolls out his unctuous but slightly halting paragraphs concerning the merits of the gentleman who has found favour in his

eyes? Where were the dead cats and the rotten eggs; the Brummagen pet and his corps; the tirailleurs instructed to cheer and groan at the right moment; the heavy metal in the rear to give weight to a moral conviction? Where were the poll sheriff and the nimble poll clerk; the important policeman who shows you the way in, and looks the other way when you come out after having voted the wrong way and are maltreated by the myrmidons of the other side? Where was the stately sheriff, big with the declaration of the poll-result known ever so long ago? Where were the candidates? Where was anybody?

I confess that as a Briton, wedded to time-honoured traditions and more or less fond of a quiet row, I was miserably disappointed with these Paris elections. Why, they had the impudence to be orderly even in Belleville. There was no nomination at all. Fancy the swindle for a man with a dint in his temple, got by a stone cast at him when "keeping the ground" at an Irish nomination. I should have been deeply gratified to have seen the whole of the 500 or 600 candidates, after a preliminary stumping of the arrondissements, give vent to their sentiments consecutively from the steps outside the Hôtel de Ville. The process might have been slightly tedious, but it could not have failed to be instructive. The only candidate I knowingly saw during the whole of the election times was M. Louis Blanc. He was not speaking when I saw him. He was eating his breakfast: and he seemed to enjoy it. I felt a craving come over me to demand, then and there, that he should get on the table and deliver an oration; but decency forbade the interruption of a man in the middle of a *plat*, and I forbore. Hustings! Polling booths! Why, the recreant and demoralised Parisians voted inside houses, and without rows of

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policemen. An election conducted in such a way was a shock to one's system. Belleville should have been good for a row. Belleville did not care twopence about the elections, and wanted food and fuel very badly. What an opening for bribery and corruption! I believe that Dr. Innes, with that big omnibus of his full of "proviant," might have headed the poll in Belleville, had he cared, and Mr. Richard Wallace might have been returned for every one of the arrondissements. It surprised one to learn that so many people took the trouble to vote. Who did vote? Who knew a man that voted? I didn't. I asked many whether they voted. One man told me his boots were bad, and he did not care to go out in the damp. Another said that in the morning he had got some fresh meat, and had spent the day in contemplation of it, in preference to going to the Mairie. But there was no question about it, some people did vote. I saw them going in and coming out—quiet, orderly folk, mostly inclined to melancholy, and suggesting by their appearance that a pot of Liebig would have done them much good; and yet such men as Gambetta, Garibaldi, and Rochfort were near the top of the poll! Were they warlike, these sombre citizens, under their lugubrious aspect, and did they crave war to the knife? or was voting for the Reds a kind of way they had of demonstrating their disgust that they didn't see it advisable to be other than peaceable? Were there half-a-dozen of them that thought more of Gambetta than of a leg of mutton; or who would have forfeited the offer of a turkey to save Garibaldi from being "shooted"? I candidly own I did not know what to make of Paris in its present guise. At times I felt prompted to pull off my hat to it, and own up to its magnanimity; at other times, I asked myself whether this magnanimity was not a sham, and another

name for utter indifference. Magnanimity or indifference, one might take his choice of terms; but the patience was unquestionable. I wonder how an English constituency would have relished being kept in suspense for five days as to the result of an election. Paris stood the delay like a lamb. I did not hear a grumble. The papers, which gave the interim results, did not seem to sell with exceptional briskness. There was no clamour for placards outside the Hôtel de Ville. I went into the place where the bewildered clerks were trying to make coherence out of the medley of votes and candidates. I got in by special favour. It struck me that if every arrondissement worked as hard as the central bureau, the final result might be known somewhere about the New Year. A column at a time of addition was enough to exhaust one of the gentlemen with red stripes down his breeches; and he was a long time in recovering from his exhaustion. I asked when the final result would be known. A shrug of the shoulders was the reply. "Dangerous, turbulent city!" said a member of the English ambulance to me, who had never visited Paris before; "why, it is as docile as my village, where there is a parson and one policeman." I did not at the time think the critic was far wrong; how we were both deceived by appearances! The noxious plant of turbulence was but stamped down, not utterly eradicated. True, if one looked hard he might, even in the times I speak of, come across mild instances where the turbulence showed faintly above the ground. I went to a red-hot Republican Club in Belleville, where I heard some remarkably wild speaking. One of the orators—from the conformation of his legs I inclined to the opinion that he was a shoemaker—evolved out of the fervour of his patriotic ardour a strategical scheme that ought, had he only got an opening, to have made him

the saviour of France. Here is the programme, much in the speaker's own words. "Ah, citizens, the hated men of the thrice-accursed William are defiling the casemates of that famous fortress to our west, that iron door which, locked, would keep out for ever the brutal barbarian. Valérien is dragged in the mire; her beauty ravished by the vile Teutons. And it was a Frenchman who deliberately handed over Valérien to the hateful embraces of these heathen hounds. Woe is me for France, that a Frenchman could have dealt this great blow to *la Patrie*. Before the shades of the mighty Republican dead I denounce this sham Republican Jules Favre; this chicken-hearted miserable pseudo-patriot; this vile panderer to the passions of the conqueror. Not now, it may be, is the time for just retribution; but, *sacré*, away in the vista of the future I see a guillotine and the heads of traitors!" Wild cheering followed, led off by a little man so covered with "fluff" that one would imagine he had been tarred and feathered, or was developing an incipient feathered state, but who, I was informed, was a journeyman flock-bed maker. I don't doubt but that he might have been very terrible in his wrath—this little fluffy advocate for the reign of terror, but when not in wrath he looked rather insignificant, and had a look as if used to be thrashed by his wife. When the cheers had subsided the bandy-legged orator went on in a practical vein. "Well, traitors have yielded Valérien; that dire fact confronts us. Is it to be said that the men of Paris are so nerveless as to sit still and look up, and see the wretched Prussian flag flouting a French sky on the battlements of Valérien? Perish the thought. No; let 20,000 patriots come forward. We shall select a leader, and he will lead us in the dead of night up the side of Valérien, and we shall fall upon the dogs, the thrice damnable Prussian

dogs, and butcher them as they snore their Teuton snore. *A bas les Prussiens! A Mont Valérien! A Mont Valérien!"* And the bandy legs jumped off the tribune with a tragic wave of his right arm over his head. His views as to the location of Mont Valérien were not apparently well defined; or if so, were erroneous. He got as far as the door and had a drink of water; then he came back. Perhaps the virtue went out of him, because those present, on whom he may have counted as the nucleus of his 20,000 recruits, confined themselves solely to cheering, and showed no anxiety to go out in the Mont Valérien direction in the damp night air.

On one of the early days of the armistice a friend of the English ambulance came in, and asked me whether I cared to accompany him on a journey round Paris, of a somewhat exceptional nature. For some two or three months he had been living in the neighbourhood of Lagny, and had made friends of many of his humble neighbours; when they heard that he was going into Paris, they had come to him, not a few of them, and begged him that he would carry a letter, it might be, or a few francs, or a piece of meat, find out their friends in Paris, and distribute unto them the tokens from outside. We started in a dog-cart, the well of which was full of provisions. Our first visit was to a lady in the Rue de Rome, a daughter of the Mayor of Lagny. For her Mr. Job had a letter. Although in such close proximity, there had been no communication between father and daughter for three months. It was pitiful to see the face grow pale, half in fear, half in hope, as the trembling hand went out for the letter; and then there was a burst of tears, and a sudden exit through a side door. Like an April morning presently came back the lady; the news was good, but, although the face was blithe, she had not

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quite conquered the tears and the twitching at the corners of the mouth. There was another emotion expressed in the face of her little daughter, when Mr. Job, who had quietly disappeared for a minute, re-entered with a fine turkey. The young fairy fell a-dancing round the respectable bird, clapping her hands and singing merrily. The breakfast stood on the table, the *pièce de résistance* being curried horseflesh—a dish I venture to recommend. This was a household in which money was plentiful, and distress had laid on its hand comparatively lightly.

Our next call was in a very different quarter, off northward and eastward into the dangerous Belleville. Belleville the dangerous was, however, as tame as if it had no savagery in its nature. Up through the narrow streets of the Quartier du Temple we drove, between the tall houses, reminding one of the old town of Edinburgh, into the traditionally most turbulent and revolutionary part of Paris. "Ah, here is a mob, at last," I remarked, as we wheeled into a narrow Rue, blocked at the upper end by a dense mass of people. Now we shall see what we shall see. What we did see was this. Some two hundred and fifty poor wretches, men, women, and children, waiting in the slush outside a wood-yard, to get a chance of buying a few sticks at the price of twenty centimes per pound. Bethnal-green the squalid never turned out pallider brats than those of Belleville; fearsome to look at were the creatures that ought to have shown chubby faces and plump cheeks, by reason of their great hollow hungry eyes and pinched wan faces. It fell out that the family of which we were in search dwelt opposite this same wood-yard, in a great old house that must have once belonged to a somebody. What a noble trait is that French one of neatness unto the death! Here in this single room, most of the belongings of which

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had gone to swell the height of the Mont de Piété, and in the cupboard of which a mouse of the slenderest appetite could not have picked up a living, everything was trim and tidy as if the times were good and the cupboard shelves had been groaning. Look at the group which the letter Mr. Job has brought draws together. A man in uniform, a brother of Madame, reads the letter. Another sister that has tried to listen for a while has broken down utterly, and leans on the shoulder of the National Guardsman, both her hands covering her face. A child in bewilderment is pulling her skirts as she looks up; and Madame herself is a study. A pretty little woman, with a thin face and a neat figure, trying so hard to be civil to the Messieurs, to thank them, and to appear as if, for the moment, there was no other object in her life but to show her gratitude. But, poor creature, the letter from her husband—a husband in a Lagny lazarette, what of him was left, for he had lost a leg since his wife had bidden him good-bye in July—that letter is being read, and she is only catching fitful scraps of sentences. I notice her, as she talks with us, set her head to one side, for all the world as you will notice a bird do, to catch a word, and the eye wanders from Mr. Job to the fraternal National Guardsman. Mr. Job has money for Madame. Madame takes the big five-franc pieces, and tries to write a receipt, but her hand will not steady itself somehow. Although the face is tolerably calm in seeming, the shaking hand betrays the hidden emotion. Not money alone has Mr. Job; in the money part of the transaction he acts only as a go-between; but it is his own act and deed to have brought this fine leg of mutton. Is he going to be mobbed as he lugs it out of the well of the dog-cart? The haunters of the outside of the wood-yard crowd around us densely; the wan-eyed children concentrate

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their gaze on the succulent mutton, their mouths watering visibly, so that you may see them actually slavering, as dogs do when they smell cooking; the men and women shoulder each other to get an eligible position for a view. "Mon Dieu, all that meat for one family!—fortunate family!" Madame suddenly becomes a personage. And we, what are we? Englishmen! Ah! God bless England, then! Has England any more legs of mutton to spare? suggests a good lady with a dirty face and a practical turn of mind. England, as presently represented, had not; but England could spare a few cuts for the children off a sausage coil; and so we drove away out of Belleville, not shot at, not jumped upon, our coats whole, and no mud upon them but that thrown up by the wheels of the dog-cart.

We wanted now to find a family at Ile St. Louis. There was a child in the case, and Mr. Job had promised some relative outside that for the behoof of the child he would hand to the mother a couple of tins of concentrated milk. Want had driven the family from the Ile St. Louis. They had flitted to Montrouge somewhere, and we had to go find them. There was a chance, too, of seeing what the bombardment had done. The first trace of it we came to was a shattered and burned house in the Avenue de la Conservatoire. The Rue d'Enfer had probably attracted more than its proportion of shells in consequence of its name, yet even here you had to use your eyes very keenly to see much damage. There was a hole in the side of the Hospice des Enfants Assistés, and the "parochial" character of the Mairie had not availed to avert the hole made in its gable. But the physical effects of the southern bombardment, so far as my observation went, had been trivial. The head of the family of which we were in search was an artilleryman of the

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National Guard. We went to the house of his captain. Captain civil, but did not know in the least where any of the men of his company lived. He had a list of their names, that was all. The addresses were the adjutant's duty, and he gave us the adjutant's address. Him we routed up, only to find that in his opinion, if to have the addresses of the men was anybody's duty at all, it was the captain's. Certainly he had no addresses. "Curious state of things," I remarked; "suppose you wanted a man in an emergency, or suppose he did not turn up when wanted at the rendezvous, how could you lay salt on the tail of your bird?" Monsieur the adjutant shrugged his shoulders, and said he daresay the man would be got at somehow in such a case; if not, it was but one man, and one man mattered no great deal. "But you have no addresses at all," said I, "and one man may swell into your whole company." Another shrug, and a "Qui sait?" so the adjutant concluded the conversation. With infinite trouble we at last found the family; the father was on duty. The child had pulled through the privations of the siege, and was in a condition to appreciate the milk Mr. Job brought for it. We had still one other place to visit, a hospice for orphans in the Rue Bossuet. There was a letter in Mr. Job's pocket for the Sister Superior from her sister, who has been working among the wounded in Lagny; and there were sundry comestibles in the well of the dog-cart for the orphans. As we drove along the Boulevard Michel we passed great flocks of sheep being driven in, with a crowd of children following them, as at home you will see the young ones hanging round a Punch on its way to a good pitch. There was a man, too, leading a solitary cow. Whether he intended to exhibit the quadruped at so much per head, and therefore was desirous to conceal it as much as possible from the

public gaze, just as a showman makes the giant stop inside the caravan, I don't know; but he had covered up the beast with a rug which hid all but legs, tail, and head. The milky mother was a decided sensation in the Boulevard Michel. When we reached the hospice, we found the orphans at what I supposed was their supper—horse broth and brown bread. The well of that dog-cart was a phenomenon. White loaves, three legs of mutton, a turkey, and half a cheese taken out at last emptied it. We made a kind of trophy of them on the table amid wondering half-timid joy on the part of the orphans, and genially grave thanks from the sisters in their white starched hoods. The well being empty, our work was over for the day.

Paris had been kept wonderfully clean during the siege, and that cleanliness had averted any raging epidemic, such as was engendered by the foul squalor that contaminated the air and everything else around Metz. But I saw during my drive an immense deal of a certain low, sluggish type of fever, bearing a close resemblance to the "famine-fever," of which during a day's walk with Mr. Catlin, of the Cow Cross Mission I noticed so much in London some eighteen months ago. The women and children were the commonest victims. It does not force you to bed, except in its last stages, this famine-fever; but any one with eyes in his head can see its victims dying as they trail their limbs listlessly about. The skin is thin, dry, and tight, but has a dull opacity that speaks of the liver action being deteriorated, and of pores refusing to fulfil their duty; the eyes have a tired, faded out-look; and the whole frame seems gradually withering away. I think a full meal of victuals, granting that it could be eaten, would kill one tolerably far gone in this disorder. I wished that I were a man of leisure,

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and had a big cellar of generous port wine, and a large consignment of quinine tincture.

Paris seemed different from Metz in one important and creditable particular; there had been no hoarding of secret stores of food on the part of "business" men, speculating on a market. In the interval between the signing of the Convention and the rolling in of provisions from outside, these hoards would have come to the front had there been any. But the shops were barer then than in the middle of January.

CHAPTER II.

The Conquerors.

It was early stirring in the Reservoir on the morning of the 1st of March—of the eventful day of the German entry into Paris. By four o'clock its passages resounded to the clink of swords and spurs. Already by that hour the silence of the broad bare streets of Versailles was broken by the tramp of many horses, as the 14th Hussars rode out to keep the ground. When I started at six, day had already nearly broken—a morning cool and grey. We passed on the road a battalion of infantry—an "early bird;" it had halted and piled arms till comrades should turn out and come up. The long forest road was traversed by only an occasional orderly of the impatient 11th Corps Artillery. Ville d'Avery, once the home of the 6th Jägers, whenever that gallant regiment happened to be "at home" from forepost work, and whither many a gallant fellow had been carried back from the foreposts to die, seemed tenanted only by three old women and a grey terrier dog. Beyond lay the pretty little cemetery of the Jägers, decorated with its wreaths, and here had halted a solitary company of infantry. As the men stood gazing on the graves of their comrades, you might have

taken them, in the dim grey morning, for phantom mourners over the gallant children of the Fatherland.

As from above St. Cloud we sighted the river, we became sensible of the magnitude of the general advance toward the common centre, the Bois de Boulogne. Long before, the barracks of Versailles, once the quarters of the soldiery that was the pomp and pride of the Empire, were pouring out their stalwart men in spiked helmets. To Neuilly, from the trim parterres of Nanterre and the river slopes of Courbevoie, the *pickelhaubes* were pressing forward. From the garrison-crater of Valérien ran down its grim sides lava streams of living armed men—men these of the mediatised provinces, Hesse, Weimar, Coburg-Gotha; men with memories of Courcelles, of the ravine of Gravelotte, of that deadly march up the Meuse from Donchery, and on to the plateau over against Sedan; with recollections of sorties, of typhus, of the knee-deep mud and the fearful mortality of the siege of Metz; yet brisk, healthy, and hearty now as if fresh from quarters at home. St. Cloud—burnt and shattered—had given up the men who may be said to have bivouacked in its roofless houses—the Sclave-faced Silesians of the Sixth Army Corps, who, disappointed of blood at Sedan, had led the still bloodless advance upon Paris, and were now to share the honours of the entry. From Sèvres the ghastly—a mild *souvenir* to them, it might be of Bazeilles—had marched out already the blue-clad Bavarians, glad as ever to stand in line alongside of the more lasting North Germans. Did they think, as they skirted the Seine, of the soil of Wörth, soaked inch deep with their south-land blood? Those who had seen the 1st Corps before von der Tann led it on the Orleans war path would have recognised, had they seen it now, but few familiar faces in the ranks. The bodies of the rest are

mouldering under the damp sod of the south. But new stuff has replaced the staunch old "cannon-fodder." The Sixth Corps and the Bavarians fraternise warmly; Silesians and "Pandours" are kindred stuff. Assuredly neither corps deserves the biting sarcasm which Frederick the Great vented on his Pandours: "You dogs, do you wish to live for ever?"

They are over the river already, these ever-forward Uhlans! Lo, their pennons on the further side as they circle among the trees, and hark! from the village of Boulogne comes on the morning air the swell of martial music. It is German music, for the French do not play the "Pariser Einzugsmarsch." If the Germans ever want a new motto to stick under the eagle, I would fain recommend "Up in the morning early." Attention to it has won not a few of their victories; this musical corps over the water must have acted upon it "bright and spry" this morning. In twenty minutes more the slopes above the Longchamps race-course are chequered with dense masses of the dark-coated guardians of the Rhine. Hauptmann von Bock's pontoon bridge was already half bordered with wreaths of laurels; on the Bois de Boulogne side a triumphal arch had been erected. Look at the enthusiasm, and in truth taste, with which this rough-handed fatigue party are twining yet more wreaths and festoons. From the bridge of Neuilly—it was eight o'clock—the artillery of the 22nd Division is moving down the broad straight road through the Bois to form near the crest of the slope opposite the pavilion. Meanwhile, the infantry of the 6th Corps are streaming over the Sèvres pontoon bridge and forming in the glades and the open places on the bight of the loop. Staff officers, conspicuous among whom are now Bavarians in their blue uniforms, are galloping across the plain after

the reckless and slightly purposeless manner of staff officers of every nationality. Not an acre of the wood but is sedulously patrolled by the Hussars; their bright blue uniforms and red-bordered new shabracques glancing between the trunks of the trees and through the denser thickets. Here comes the Gotha Regiment, not, however, headed by the Herzog. From the other direction comes at a crashing gallop, in squadrons, the 11th Hussars, the Frankfurt Regiment; the squadrons get to charging pace as they wheel round a clump, and are steady in position before your admiration of their galloping has subsided. By half-past nine the formation is gradually taking shape. Hark! there is a cannon shot, and another. Are they from Paris, or are the gunners in Versailles fouling their tubes with the blank cartridge of a Royal Salute as the Emperor leaves the Prefecture? Crash! another kind of music. With a quick bicker of the drums, there strides through the trees of the south and athwart the slope, a battalion of Bavarian infantry, with the black shaving brushes crowning the helmets; they wheel, form columns of companies, and take ground with faces toward the Grand Stand. There comes yet another and another battalion of the blue Bavarians, with Uhlans and Artillery following, till the whole of the regiments representing the 1st Corps (Hartmann's) is in position.

By ten o'clock, when the Bavarians were fairly in position in the centre, the infantrymen of the 6th Corps, who had previously been lying down on the breast of the slope on their left, had fallen in and moved out into the plain in close columns of companies aligning on the Bavarians on their right; the latter, again aligning on the division of the 11th Corps forming the right of the line. The long line stretching from end to end of the racecourse

was everywhere four companies deep. It was broken by narrow intervals marking the distances between the battalions—intervals that one unaccustomed to the aspect of the formation of troops might hardly have discerned. The second line—at a distance of four hundred paces in rear of the first—was composed alternately of regiments of cavalry and batteries of artillery. The intervals in the second line are wider than in the first. The general esplanade in front of the grand stand is kept clear, but the "ring" before it is crowded with a brilliant and kaleidoscopic throng of mounted officers—Uhlans, Dragoons, Hussars, Cuirassiers, and Staff; the pride and pomp of military Germany. It is swept away to the right, as if some invisible besom were in action on it, leaving the racecourse "finish" bare, and the level beyond, where so often have stood the carriages of the *monde* and *demi-monde* of Imperial Paris, without a living thing on it but the inevitable dog. There is a sedulous dressing up of the first line, till, standing by the side of the right-hand man of the right-hand regiment, and resting the barrel of a rifle across his chest, you might have sped the bullet down the line and harmed never a man. Across the extreme right behind the troops are drawn, in a wide segment of a semicircle, and in clumps here and there, the carriages of those who have the right of entry within the cordon formed by the Hussars. Behind them, again, is a lofty battlemented tower, sweeping from its summit the whole line from the right to the left. Not a few think the parapet surrounding the toy windmill, some 150 yards to the front, the most eligible point of view. You may meet English and American ladies there, interspersed with doctors and journalists of all nations. I think not a few of the smarter of the latter, and all the artists, whose name is legion, would take in preference

to the battlements of the lofty tower, if they only knew what a coign of vantage they afford.

The front of the Prussian divisions on either wing is clear. Before the centre of the Bavarians in the middle stand two mounted men, the Imperial Crown Prince, the commander of the third army, and his *Flügeladjutant*. A few straggling horsemen saunter with seeming aimlessness about the grand stand, and the pause of expectancy becomes almost painful. The second line—the cavalry and artillery interspersed—turn the interval to account by perfecting the accuracy of its dressing. Each individual corps and battery was long ago dressed to death as regards itself, but it is now the somewhat defective alignment which is being seen to.

At ten minutes past eleven, without a moment's warning, a wild cheer of enthusiasm flashes along the line. A clash of music as the bands burst into "God Save the King." Half-a-dozen horsemen are galloping up from behind an angle of the stand, straight to the right of the line. The leader, an upright, broad-shouldered old man, with snow-white hair, half halts his horse with a handwave of salutation, as he reaches the Imperial Crown Prince, then gallops on with the latter hanging close on his flank. He pulls his horse on its haunches as he reaches the flank, and the "windmill battery" bursts out into a "hip, hip, hurrah," a waving of handkerchiefs, and a clapping of female hands. No need to tell England at this time of day that the white-haired soldier on the noble black horse is Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany. The densely packed staff that has been in waiting in front of the right come prancing up as the Emperor wheels his horse's head to the left, and commences his slow march along the front. Two horsemen are before him. An interval, and then the grand old man proceeds

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alone, the solitary focus of the splendid picture. This great day for the Empire of which he is the ruler seems to have cured him of his ailments. Where is the lumbago, the gradual decay, the breaking up about this fresh-coloured old chieftain, with the eye like a hawk? His crest is as erect, his back as straight, his seat as firm, his bridle-hand as light on the black horse, as those of his gallant son, who seems so proud of his father. Verily he reneweth his youth as doth the eagle, this stalwart, sempervirent Monarch of the Teutons. His son follows him half a horse's length behind him, and then, princes, powers, and potentates—half the Gotha Almanack. Great heavens! are these deep-throated men of the mediatised provinces under the belief that if they but cheer loud enough, the roar of their glad clamour will echo in billows of sound across that Rhine which so well they have helped to keep? Sharper and shriller, but to the full as loud, and with a hot ring in it as when steel, not iron, is struck by the hammer, bursts out the cheer of the children of King Ludwig. Germans, allies of Prussia not in name alone, but in heart, the alliance sealed loyally by a deluge of Bavarian blood, they have earned good right and title to stand here in line to-day, and to claim the low bend of appreciation that the Emperor of Germany accords them. But although the Bavarian troops cheer the Emperor of Germany and King of Prussia, the Bavarian bands will by no means strike up the Prussian National Hymn. For has not Bavaria a national *Lied* of her own, a wild fanciful air, befitting the Landsleute to whom it appertains?

The Kaiser is not well among the Bavarians till the 22nd division is bodily out into the plain in dense masses; having left-wheeled, they stand looking at the Emperor's back. The distant, and yet more distant roar

of cheering comes to us on the right from the far away left flank formed by the 6th Corps, and then, as the Emperor turns the left flank, and comes towards us again along the front of the second rank—the cavalry and artillery—the cheering draws nearer and nearer. As its right flank, in its turn, is gained, and the head of the staff turns away toward the pavilion, men notice, and the kindly German hearts swell at the sight, that Royal father and Royal son have drawn together—horse head to horse head. Etiquette is potent, but more potent still is love; and surely if ever there was love between father and son, it is between these two. See; the proud father lays his hand on the neck of his son's horse, and the staff fall back in delicacy as the two converse. Then spurs go into the horses' sides, the raking black goes to the front again, followed by the white-heeled chesnut. The staff dash through an interval of the 22nd division, and the Emperor takes up his position in front of the east end of the pavilion.

The drums crash out, and the marching past has begun with the infantry, the 83rd Regiment leading. The formation is close columns of companies. The Prussian marching is very fine, but the infantry men hardly show so well in columns of companies as when marching in fours. Let the civilian onlooker regard the sloped arms —indication that this is a display in time of war, and not a bath-brick and pipe-clay review in the piping times of peace. Before night it was not utterly impossible that these now sparkling bayonets might have their sheen smirched with blood. To my thinking the triumph of the Prussian marching past was reserved for their Artillery, which went past in a manner simply perfect. No dress parade on Woolwich Common, after a month's preliminary battery drill, ever surpassed it. In a military experience

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of not a short duration, I never saw finer dressing than that displayed by the companies of the Bavarian battalions, as they stood waiting on the racecourse for the word to march. Away goes their general staff in advance, the white cocks' feathers of the chiefs floating out in the air like handfuls of snow-flakes. The leading battalion follows, at a short, jerky quick step, to the music of a curious breakdown jig, such as I have often heard in pantomimes. It made a tidy marching step, and the Bavarians did their best; but a martinet would have thought more of them had he never seen them in motion. As with the Prussians, their Artillery excelled their infantry in marching past. But writing of marching past, what shall one say of a detachment—a column—a what shall I call it?—of half-a-dozen ambulance waggons in line dressing as true as the smartest horse artillery in the world? What a gallant show make the light blue and white pennons of the Bavarian Uhlans as they sweep down the slope in quarter squadron formation to take up their station in the marching-past order! The flashing lance-heads seem dressed as smartly up in the air there as the noses of the horses are in the ranks. Truly a gallant and chivalric sight these brilliant lancers of the Pfalz, sharing, to the mind of an old cavalry man, with the Dragoons and Hussars the chief honours of the day. Out rings the clarion of the trumpets, clash goes the silver music of the kettledrums, tempered by the deep notes of the ophicleide. The horses, ever lovers of sweet sounds, arch their necks, champ the bits, and toss flecks of foam back on the polished leathers of the riders. They are as proud as if they realised the meaning and the glory of the day.

But enough, surely, of marching past. Getting tedious is the spectacle, and *à fortiori* its relation must do after

a short time. Yet it is not fair to quit the subject without one word. These troops, reader, passing there daintily clean in serried files that would have rejoiced the heart of an adjutant of the Guards, these troops have had other work for the last six months than to study the trimness of drill and dressing. Fighting, falling, bivouacking, earthworking, marching for hours, weeks, months at a stretch, there are few soldiers, according to the rules of the old school, whose parade neatness would not have deteriorated. The secret lies here, that in the thick of the fighting, marching, and bivouacking, time was found in these German ranks for such *divertissement* as the goose-step.

For the march-past spectators had mostly forsaken other points and converged on the neighbourhood of the shattered Grand Stand. A strange scene it was to be sure—ladies, correspondents, artists, royal servants, field postmen, aye, marketenders even, male and female, packing pretty closely here within the odour of royalty. I have a fancy that that black servant of Prince Carl is a cynic, standing there showing his big white teeth, and looking for all the world like a Zouave that has seen the error of his way and adopted the Fatherland and a costume with buttons. When the heads of the 11th Corps column and of that of the Bavarians showed themselves conspicuously on the road toward Paris, having wheeled left-about after marching past, and strode away toward Paris, I fear the stalwart Silesians got scant recognition of their smart marching past. There was a general rush Parisward of the non-officials, eager to conquer even the victors in celerity. But those who waited saw a right genial and soldier-like sight after the last of the 6th Corps had filed past. The Kaiser turned his horse and met his son face to face. Hand went out to hand, and the grip

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was given of love and mutual appreciation. Then the Staff came forward—the Princes, Poins, and "Lairdies" —and they had doffed bonnets and congratulatory words for their monarch. It was truly the right time for congratulation—the morning of the consummation of triumph. You were saying in England the triumph was remorseless and over stern. Look for the refutation of this inside Paris; on the day when what I am writing of was being transacted;—inside Paris, where the cowardly yelpers of the canaille were impotently hauling about their pitiful field-pieces in quarters you might be sure enough would not be visited by the German men-at-arms; throwing up trumpery barricades, from which, as ever, they would run like hounded foxes, yelling *trahison;* assailing with their venomous rancour honest neutrals who meant them no evil; and clamouring that, because Paris was not wholly occupied, Paris was not utterly at the feet of the conqueror. Say, I pray you, did such a citizenhood deserve—had they earned the Quixotic consideration that would tempt soldiers in war time to yield the price of their victories and of their losses? Say you not rather, now that prejudice has cooled, that it might have been the best thing that could have befallen this impotently truculent populace that they should have been made to pass through the burning fiery furnace of the uttermost degradation of humiliation?

The heads of columns took two ways through the Bois, the Prussians all but skirting the *enceinte*, the Bavarian Uhlans adventurously plunging into the bosky dells of the wood—wherein indeed these slashing soldiers lost themselves, and threatened to become Teutonic babes of the wood, but for certain awe-stricken Frenchmen, who put the advance guard right at least half-a-dozen times. The ignorance on the part of the Bavarians of the topo-

graphy of the Bois de Boulogne lost them the priority. When we gained the open, lo! on our left front was Rittmeister von Jachmann's squadron of the 13th Hussars, followed by the staff of the 22nd Division. It was too aggravating to see in the near foreground the grizzled grey whisker of General von Schachtmeyer, commander of the 11th Corps, and not to see the full face of him. Five minutes' gallop sufficed for this. The Porte Maillot was reached; there was a brief parley about a certain gate which had been walled up, a move forward, and we were in l'Etoile that spreads its rays inside the gate. A few forlorn, but self-respecting douaniers kept over it a nominal guard; farther inside were some green-coated gendarmes, and von Jachmann's Hussars held the gorge of the Avenue Beaugar. In the centre sat grey von Schachtmeyer, pulling his grizzled moustache; he had his dispositions to make, and these were seemingly aided by capillary exercitation. A man of prompt action is von Schachtmeyer. "The 22nd Division will march on to the Place du Roi de Rome, and there pile arms; the Bavarians will march by the Arch of Triumph, down the Champs Elysées, on to the Place de la Concorde; the 6th Corps will follow, and occupy the Place de l'Etoile and the Champs Elysées themselves—and now *Vorwärts!*"

At the word the cavalry trumpets ring out, and the officers shout "March!" On they go up the deserted Avenue, followed by the 80th Regiment playing lustily the Paris March. On, through the appalling solitude of the Avenue Beaugar, across the Place d'Eylau, where stood a solitary horseman, and up the Avenue de Malakoff to the Place du Roi de Rome. There were those among the on-lookers who had seen the French soldiers march with their English allies into the grim fortress from

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which this avenue takes its name. Where were the men who stormed the Mamelon, the dauntless and crafty campaigners of the Crimea? Alas! their courage sapped, their craft gone, they, and men who should have been such as they, were languishing in the German prisons, and the conquerors of the new era of warfare were marching in triumph over them up the Avenue named after one of their deeds of prowess. The head of the long snaky column marches steadily on through curious groups—for the Avenue de Malakoff is densely populated, and its inhabitants cannot resist the humiliating fascination—till at length it reaches the Trocadero. Lo! before the Teuton host lies Paris as in a panorama. Over against rises the gilded dome of the Invalides. Are the ashes of the First Napoleon quiescent in the sarcophagus to-day? Behind, the grand pile of the Arch of Triumph rears its head. In the distance rise the towers of St. Sulpice, the Pantheon, and Notre Dame. At our feet winds the Seine, striped out with its beautiful quays, esplanade, and bridges; beyond the Champs de Mars, clad with the white tents of the French. On the Field of the God of War a dense mass has collected of French soldiers, no longer warriors. And what effect has this rich and varied panorama on the German soldiery? Business first of course. They tramp on with the stolidity of perfect discipline, form companies on the grassy slope leading down to the river, and pile arms with mathematical precision. And then they are free to stare and wonder. It is blank wonderment at first; then the gradual dawn of profound silent admiration. The wistfulness of that concentrated fixture of the multitudinous eyes! And then a man with a deep sigh, such as a man heaves after a long pull at a beer flask, gasps out the single word, "Wunderschön!" He breaks the ice. There is a chorus of "wunderschöns,"

and the Teutons, with that love of pure beauty which is one of their best attributes, fall to quiet, thoughtful comment on the glories of Paris. They lie down on the grass, and drink their fill of the sight; they roll it like a sweet morsel under their tongue; they lave themselves, so to speak, in the beauties of the beautiful city. The Pont du Champs de Mars down below has its German end still held by a Zouave guard, and they have run a rude barricade across it, consisting of a mule cart and a few baskets. A company is marched down; it halts, and the hauptmann rides out and parleys with the Zouave officer amid the intense interest, not unmingled with hooting, of the densely lined quay on the opposite side. The fezzes cross the bridge, and the spiked helmets occupy the hither end; straightway the two sentries of the "double post" are stalking to and fro as if they had held the ground from beyond the memory of man. Up on the brow of the slope his Reverence, the division chaplain, on a white horse, is gazing open-mouthed on the scene; but never mind him, let us push now to the Arch of Triumph. As we walk along the Rue du Roi de Rome, we see the chalk marks of the *Quartiermeister* already on the doors, and the German flag is floating from the conciergerie window of the Commandant. The neighbourhood of the Arch of Triumph is densely crowded with the infantry of the 6th Army Corps halted, with portly old von Tümpling sitting in his saddle at their head. Thickly interspersed with them were Parisians, chiefly of the lower order. Boys, tatterdemalion gamins, were in wild profusion—young rascals of wonderful pantomimic ability, with a concerted shrill whistle that drowned or discorded the music of the bands. Already the versatile rogues had learned to mimic the harsh words of command and the somewhat clumsy gestures of the men.

Impudent varlets they were, and they had apparently already gauged the good temper of the Hussars who kept the ground, for they mocked without ceasing, in apparent certainty of impunity. But clear the way, ye gamins! At a lumbering canter come some gigantic cuirassiers of the Guard Corps, and then the general staff. No, good friends with the broad Sclave-features, ye stout Kinder of von Tümpling, you need not glance so keenly up at the arch there. For the Emperor comes not, neither comes his son, yet the blood royal of Prussia is not unrepresented. For there is Prince Albrecht, of the cavalry, and burly Admiral Adalbert, looking uncommonly like the late Sir Charles Napier, and as bad a rider as are most sailors. And here is a face familiar to and honoured by me, by reason of sincere respect and many kindnesses—the face of the Heir Apparent to the throne of Saxony, at once a Prince and a soldier. And he of Saxe Coburg Gotha, and Luitpold of Bavaria, and Leopold of Hohenzollern, and, not to waste the readers' time and my own ink, the whole ruck of the "*Zweite Staffel*," the blue-blooded band of "wee German lairdies," not a few of them very big in bodily bulk and in their own conceit.

Following the general staff come the Bavarian troops, marching still to the breakdown in half-company columns. The men of the 6th Army Corps follow them towards the Place de la Concorde, and we fall into the tide on the broad side-walk. The soldiers already billeted are staring out of window or loitering by the doorways. I ask a Hessian dragoon what he thinks of Paris. "Oh, it's very fine," he replies, much in the tone of the Scotch baillie who thought Edinburgh could not hold a candle to Peebles. "But"—there was a "but" in every fibre of the tone—"but he had got nothing to eat yet, and there was no straw for his own or his horse's bed." Not

surely a fierce requisitionist this man, whose *summum bonum* in the bed line lies in a lock of straw. Wood was another want which the occupants of the little theatres on the Champs Elysées were fast repairing by dragging out and chopping up the chairs and benches, with which they lit their *al fresco* fires in the garden plots. The 22nd Division men on the Trocadero had been able to stack arms and lie down. Not so their comrades on the Place de la Concorde. There were too many disturbant elements simmering in the vicinity. It is true that single officers walked unmolested through the crowds on the side-walks, that the Princes rode leisurely to and fro, the cynosures of all eyes. But there was an ugly yeasty throng, not so much in the Champs Elysées as in the Place de la Concorde. Here the Bavarians stood to their positions looking up at the statues of the chief French cities, the faces of which were each veiled in crape. Through the film of black, German Strassburg looked down dimly upon the German soldiers, her pedestal still bedight with the wreaths and garlands which grateful Paris had affixed thereunto. Down the vista of each entering street was apparent first a thin and vacillating line of red-breeched troops of the French line, nearer now to the Germans than ever they had dared to come before. Behind this line again a densely-packed crowd of angry, truculent faces, with a dash of the wolf about the eyes of them, bloodthirsty, yet cowards the whole pack. Looking at them is one man by the statue of Rouen here, whom not to name would be to leave my description very incomplete—a tall strong man, in a Cuirassier uniform without the cuirass, but with the helmet. Paris looks at the keen eyes, the *brusque* moustache, and the square lower jaw, as if it ought to know them, yet is not quite sure about it. Take your helmet off, Otto

von Bismarck-Schönhausen, and let the gazers have the worth of their money in a long stare.

And this allusion to the impotently furious population leads up to a narrative of the aspect which Paris presented when the German occupation began. I had striven exceedingly hard to think well of Paris under this tribulation of hers. Nor had I been altogether without justification. Only on the 28th of January, when everybody was talking of revolution and anarchy, I had made a perambulation of the quarters whence were reported the chief disturbances, and had come back unmolested; and after what I had seen, with the word "calumniation" ready on my lips. The silence and solitude of the Avenue Beaugar, by which we had entered Paris, had seemed very pathetic. The proud beauty, I said to myself, is veiling her eyes from her humiliation. The Avenue de Malakoff took the edge off the sentiment, and it vanished utterly when a little woman who kept an auberge, where I quenched my thirst in beer, importuned me to bring her as many Prussian customers as possible, and did not hesitate to designate them as bons garçons. She might have been an isolated case; but the aspect of the Champs Elysées clenched the nail. All Paris was there, as you may have seen on a day when there was a grand Imperial pageant. Ladies in dainty dresses and high-heeled boots tripped about; chevaliers of France, with the ribbons in their button-holes, gratified their curiosity at the expense of their honour. The windows were so full that I imagine some of them must have been let for money. But it was the conduct of what may be designated the mob, that disgusted me most. Touch a German soldier they dared not. They cowered—half a hundred of the white-blooded hounds—before a solitary Uhlan strolling his horse listlessly about. But let them only catch an

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unfortunate civilian, and then just mark their valour. Fortunately they were too limp and vague to know how to take life adroitly, else many a murder might have been done in Paris this afternoon. Say you I speak from prejudice? My prejudice, if I had any, was fain to lie the other way. I speak from sore-boned experience. As I walked down the Champs Elysées, the Crown Prince of Saxony with his staff rode by. His guest for many a week before, I would have eaten dirt had I not raised my hat to his Royal Highness. He returned my salute, and, beckoning to me, shook hands, and a short conversation ensued. After I had taken my leave, Count Vitzthum, his aide-de-camp, rode after me to communicate from the Prince a piece of information which he was kind enough to think would be of interest to me. My companion and myself soon found that this episode had gained us the marked attention of about a hundred of the hungry prowlers after heroic seizures on which no risk was attendant. We thought little of the demonstration at first, and tried to lose our suite by turning back in the rear of the Bavarians, and halting there, but our unconcern seemed but to aggravate the patriots. After much consultation a little party came forward and civilly requested us to accompany them to a certain post. Although apprehensive of the consequences, we were unwilling to appeal to the Bavarian officers, and so be the possible means of precipitating a fracas; we therefore complied. No sooner were we outside the German quarter than the tactics were changed. My friend was torn away from me, and for many hours I saw no more of him. Cries of "Mouchard," "Sacré Prussien," "Cochon," assailed me. Somebody hit me over the head with a stick; another kicked me from behind; yet another tripped me up. I went down, and the patriots jumped

on me with sabots. I struggled up, and hitting out right and left, made my way to an officer of the National Guard. He laughed and turned away. Then they got me down again, striking each other in their eagerness to have a blow at me. Some clamoured, "To the Seine with him," but others, the majority, were for the police station. Thither, accordingly, I was conducted in a novel fashion, on my back and dragged by the legs, a distance of some 300 yards. Needless to say that my coat was in ribbons, my head was cut, my back bumped into bruises, my legs torn nearly out of the sockets. Great powers! how I longed, as they dragged me along, for a single section of the old Royal Dragoons, or that I might have a chance at but three of the cowards at a time! Chucked inside the police station like a bale of goods, I was conveyed by a back door, and in the pleasing companionship of a drunken woman, a blouse who had stolen a lump of putty, and a tatterdemalion who had been seen selling a couple of cigars to a German, to a certain prefect, a venerable gentleman in a white tie. I sent a note to the British Embassy, whence emanated with creditable alacrity the porter, an official whom I had learnt to look upon as the British Embassy incarnate. The benevolent prefect released me, and I was glad to slink home in my soiled and tattered clothes. I paid another visit, however, to the Place de la Concorde. There I noticed what seemed threatening symptoms. The French mob was sorely taxing the patience of the Bavarians, whose blood was beginning evidently to rise. I should in no wise have wondered, I said to myself, as I turned away, if there were wild work before morning; and it struck me with surprise that the Germans had not cleared their quarter and held it militarily. But it was not for me to stay and watch what might befall. There

was other work before me. It was past five o'clock, and I had to be outside the *enceinte* by six. A dog-cart, with a stout horse, was waiting for me by the Madeleine. Bruised, sore, with the blood and mud yet unwashed from the back of my head, I had still my programme to fulfil. Up the Rue de Lavalette, almost deserted; along the flank of the Terminus du Nord, and so into the Rue de La Chapelle at a smart trot. La Chapelle was up, and its truculent dwellers scowled and muttered at us as we passed. My driver, a Frenchman, lost his nerve, and began to tremble. I made him change places, and got hold of the reins myself. A long look ahead showed me no babies and no barricades, so I dropped the whip over the good horse's flank, and let him have his head. Before we got to the Porte they were yelling after us like a pack of mongrels, "Prussien!" "Prussien!" "A bas le Prussien!" Only once through the gate, and they might yell till they burst. But, lo! the drawbridge was up. There faced me, as I drove up, the grim faces of a couple of mitrailleuses, pointed down the Rue. And the pursuers were hot on our heels. Away to the left, clear and deserted ran the intra-enceinte road leading to the gate of St. Ouen. I turned the horse's head down this and sprung him into a gallop. I had sunk my tail before I reached the gate of St. Ouen, which was open, and through which I drove without interruption. Then there was the ten miles' trot out to Margency, where General von Schlotheim had kindly given me permission to use the head-quarter telegraph wire, and then, without a moment to spare, another drive back to St. Denis, to catch there the train leaving Paris at nine p.m. for Calais. I reached England at six the following evening, handed in the "copy" I had written on the way, and was on the way back in the mail train by nine o'clock the same night.

When I got back to Paris on the forenoon of the 4th, I found that the Germans had cleared out that morning, and that Paris was in ecstasies over her triumph. Lives there the man who understands Paris and the rationale of its shifting moods? Man, say I! He must be something more than man—a creature gifted with the powers of penetration of an augur, and with a variety of other all but impossible qualifications. I could not, for the life of me, understand Paris. I could not, being as I hope a reasonable man paying poor-rates, and having a respect for constituted authorities, get any further insight into the inscrutable mystery of Paris than the acknowledgment that she "is a thing which no fellow can understand." She has as many notes as an Æolian harp. In the beginning of February she had been in abject despair. She was decent then, and I had felt bound to respect the dignity with which her quiet despair manifested itself. On the 1st of March she had been rabid yet cowardly; sublimely foolish; utterly lost to a sense of dignity or even of shame; truculent where she dared to be so; utterly contemptible in every respect in the eyes of those who would fain have respected her most. By the 4th of March the wheel had come round full circle. The Germans were gone. "Richard is himself again." Paris was full of complacency, the logic of which was not easy to understand. Here, so far as I could make out, was the process of reasoning:—"The hated intruders have gone away after a very brief stay. They meant to stop ever so much longer. The Prussian Guards made sure they were coming in. The Saxons were dying to do the same, and are dying now with disappointment. But the aspect of Paris struck terror into the Teuton soul. The foe bundled out in hot haste, awed by the black thunder-cloud of the impending storm. On the

whole their evacuation is rather more creditable to Paris than victory gained in a set fight. They have practically run away. We are free from the incubus; let us be ourselves again. We have, so to speak, scowled them out; now let us smile at the success of our scowl."

"Smile" is hardly the word; it seemed to me Paris was to-day positively on the broad grin of complacency. She had legitimately earned her triumph. With the stern rigour befitting the circumstances, she had actively discountenanced anybody holding communication with the foe. She had jumped upon men unfortunate enough to know any member of a confraternity of nations numbering some forty millions of souls; she had stripped women naked who had dared to smile upon the Teuton satyrs. Let me not malign Paris. In some cases she had not stripped the women naked; I had heard of instances in which bonnets, stockings, and boots had been left. She had sacked a café where a few German officers took supper, thereby *pro tanto* purging herself of the unclean thing. I believe an extensive use was being made of Condy's disinfecting fluid and chloride of lime in the Palais de l'Industrie, the theatres on the Champs Elysées, and other public buildings occupied by the Germans. Deodorisers had been largely strewn over the thoroughfares used by them, and the chain of the enclosure around the Arc de Triomphe, over which the young hussar lieutenant jumped his horse, had been removed and replaced. The original chain was no doubt being melted down into axles for dung-carts.

The foes having recoiled in rapid panic from the consequences which they had so rashly and unthinkingly braved, Paris remained the virtual mistress of the field. Why should she not enjoy her triumph? She was doing so. Her valiant soldiery, now that peace was signed,

looked and spoke as if it were by a crowning and special exercise of their mercy that the Germans were allowed to exist in the neighbourhood, and as good as intimated that they only did so on sufferance, and to give them time to pack up their portmanteaus without undue bustle and haste. The streets had burst out into sudden liveliness. All the shops were open. It was a beautiful day, and everybody was out walking and enjoying the triumph. It was a singular evidence of the moderation of the Parisians that there was at night no movement in favour of a general illumination. Cynics may say that a lack of gas prevented this demonstration, but I for my part am inclined to believe that the reason was based upon much higher grounds. Since I had been in Paris, I had observed how much the Parisians had before now held aloof from their favourite exercise of sitting in front of the cafés. Those few who dared to be *outré* and to break the rule sat as if they had the stringhalt, with their legs ignobly tucked under them. Mark the contrast to-day. Everyone was sitting in the sunshine outside the cafés, and everybody was stretching his legs as well out before him as their natural configuration and the condition of his boots would legitimately permit. There was a method in this seeming trifle. The straddle of the Parisian legs intimated the rehabilitation of the self-complacency.

In one of Mr. Dickens's novels, somebody calls attention to the mystery attending the disappearance of dead donkeys and old postboys. Had the sagacious observer in question been in Paris at this period, I think he might have added a third wonderment to his list. What on earth had become of the crowd—crowd is too good a word—of the scum of wretches that had inundated the German quarter and its environs on the 1st?

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Where were the stunted, thin-faced, evil-eyed, scraggy-necked, knob-jointed, white-livered horde of miscreants that had yelled and whistled and swore and shrunk into their clumsy sabots or rotten high-lows when a German looked their way? Where the noble bands of patriots that had stripped wretched women and painted the German colours on their naked flesh? Where the three hundred heroes, none above five feet three inches in height, who had achieved the gallant exploit of my capture, and, with such Herculean exertions for the behoof of *la patrie*, dragged me along in the gutter? I protest I could not find a trace of them, nor could I find anybody who knew anything as to their whereabouts. Certainly they were not myths. My knuckles demonstrated unto me the certainty that they were not "trifles light as air," even if my back and ribs had not been confirmatory. And I think I should have known some of my more particular friends again if I could only see them. My supply of cartes de visite was unfortunately short, but I took the liberty of distributing a few souvenirs, which were not so graciously received as might have been, but yet might have served for purposes of identification. But the whole horde had utterly vanished—faded clean out of sight. People told me I could find a large proportion of its members in Belleville. I went to Belleville in the afternoon, but saw nobody I knew, and not many of the pattern of my friends. Did they live habitually in the cellars, these interesting contributions to the aggregate of the population of Paris, and never came up but when there was some work to be done that was after their own hearts? There are roughs in London. These I know where to find. They are something like roughs, too. The K division of police runs small, and a good Shoreditch or Whitechapel rough has no objection, when oc-

casion demands, to cope singly with any member of that respected force. But the Paris rough, as he demonstrated himself on the 1st of March, is individually a contemptible creature. Physically he is a cross between a cat and a rabbit. His lust for blood beats that of a stoat—and it is here wherein he differs from your British rough, who hates blood except under the skin in the shape of extravasation—but his cowardice interferes with his realisation of the treat. Where he gets to when times are not favourable for the free development of his idiosyncrasy was to me one of the chiefest of the many puzzles which this strange city afforded.

Quiet head-quarters ordinarily were those of Prince George at Le Vert Galant. But on the night before the review at Villiers, on the 7th of March, there were no cards, and the bureau was full of the staff immediately after coffee-time. For any quantity of organization had to be perfected for the morrow, and then there was after to-morrow also to be seen to. For in a day or two the Saxons were to quit the face of Paris to occupy the Ardennes, with head-quarters at Rethel.

There was not a little disappointment in the Maas Army that it had not fallen to its lot to see the inside of Paris. But the reparation for the disappointment was thorough. To whatever quarter others might point as the scene of their exploits, they were reviewed far away therefrom. Even the Guards—forming as they did a portion of the Maas army—were brought to Longchamps to be reviewed, away from Le Bourget, so wedded to their name, from Pierrefitte and Stains, the gallantly held forepost villages, in order that there might be no Prussian element in the force which the Emperor reviewed on the scene of a victory won by Saxon and Würtemberger arms. It is not easy to conceive of a greater compliment

paid to soldiery than that which the Emperor paid in this review to the fighting men of his allies. Located as he was at Versailles, he did not see the deadly struggles of the 30th November and 2nd of December. But on the ground where the review of the 7th of March was held it scarcely lay with any one to ask for corroborative proof of the narrative given by the despatches. The Saxons and Würtembergers might have said to any one asking for a sign and token, "Si monumentum quæris, circumspice." For the review was held at Villiers, the key of the position in the desperate fights of the 30th November and 2nd December. Monuments of valour were everywhere around; honour was done to men on the very spot where they had gained and maintained their fighting fame. Look up and around, O Emperor-King! and realise what these troops battled against in the days I speak of. See how close is Avron, its bluff then crowned with the big naval guns that helped to shatter Brie, and made this Villiers here a place to wonder at and shudder at, till such time as the masons shall have made good the damages. Frowns out upon the Horseshoe that grim Fort Nogent there, that could throw shells even into Champs, and lower down the batteries of Faisanderie and Gravelle contributed to the dominance now happily departed. From the south-west, Charenton casts a baleful side-look on Champigny and Chenevières; its squint is ugly now, even when we know it is harmless. Monuments of Saxon and Würtemberger valour! I have named some, for they have had to be valorous men that stood up against the impact of the projectiles cast by these now harmless forts. Other monuments were there, too, in abundance. Kaiser, you can look no whither but you look on graves of brave men who died for you and the Fatherland! From where we stood as the Emperor rode

on to the field, we could see many of the mounds over the trenches which served as graves. We were standing within view of the spot where I shook hands with the two Saxons, boy-lieutenants of the 108th, as the regiment went out to close quarters, and when it came back it had left the lads needing nothing but the grave a little way to the front yonder. Monuments for Saxon braves! Surely the laurels were already growing thick over the dead brows, for they must have been well watered. Aye, watered by the tears of women in the quiet villages of the Saxon Switzerland. Watered by the tears of such as the lone mother, who wanted to know about her boy who "has blue eyes, flaxen hair, and a green stone ring on one of the fingers of the right hand." Watered by the tears of the woman of Kamenz, one of whose sons lies two hundred yards nearer Brie than where we stood; the other had by this time begun to limp on one leg about the lazarette. Monuments—aye, if of loss, also of valour. There is Brie below us, held by a single regiment for hours against an army. To the left is Champigny, to hold and to retake which the Würtembergers poured out their blood as if it had been water, and counted their lives but as dross. On this peninsula was enacted the turning-point scene of the siege of Paris. Had these 25,000 men not been staunch, 100,000 Frenchmen would have been outside the ring of environment. Let Deutschland never forget, while grateful memory is left her, what she owes for these two momentous days to the Saxons and Würtembergers. But for them it might have been that Kaiser Wilhelm would have been in other plight than reviewing troops here to-day in peace.

As we left Le Vert Galant early in the morning, and took the pleasant winding road through the forest of Bondy, one would have been puzzled what to say of the

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weather. Now it smiled, now it looked uncommonly like weeping; yet still there was no rain. Around Chelles were halted the cavalry and artillery of the 23rd division (Montbé's), and over the pontoon bridge at Cournay, and so along the south bank to Neuilly. The last time I had passed this way the riding was hardly so pleasant, as those great shell holes gave evidence. Then up on to the broad flat upland between Neuilly and Villiers, with Brie on its right front—the very tract for which the French fought so fiercely on the 2nd. It was fringed with battery emplacements. The most reckless aide-de-camp dared not gallop over it, for there were shell holes at every second horse length over the whole surface. The ground did not admit of such a formation as that which was effected at Longchamps. Somebody had to stand out and go to the rear, and as the commander of the Maas Army was a Saxon, he chivalrously ruled that his countrymen should give the *pas*. On the right of the first line stood the Würtembergers, with their artillery and cavalry in another line behind them; on their left the Bavarians, with their artillery and cavalry arranged similarly. At a considerable distance in the rear, and rather behind the Bavarians than the Würtembergers, was the Saxon infantry, with its cavalry and artillery in its rear. There was no selection here of one battalion of each regiment, as at the review in the Bois de Boulogne. Each battalion was represented, but its number was restricted to 500 men. Judging from appearances, several of the battalions, particularly among the Bavarians, hardly knew how to complete even this muster, notwithstanding the recent reinforcements. The troops on the parade were as follows:—The Würtemberger Division, consisting of twelve infantry regiments, of one battalion each (the Würtembergers have not yet adopted the Prussian ar-

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rangement of three battalions in a regiment), four cavalry regiments, and proportional field artillery, the whole under the command of General von Obernitz; the 1st Bavarian Army Corps, under the command of General von der Tann, and the 12th (Royal Saxon) Army Corps, commanded by Prince George of Saxony. The latter corps comprised the 23rd division, commanded by General von Montbé, the youngest divisional general in the German armies, and contained the 101st, 102nd, and 103rd regiments, and the gallant Schützen regiment; and the 24th division, commanded by General von Nehrhoff, containing the 105th, 106th, and 107th regiments, and the Saxon Jägers. There were but two regiments of Saxon cavalry on the field; the rest, quartered at Compiègne, after taking part in the campaign of the North, were too far off to be present at a review ordered on so short a notice. All the artillery of the 12th Corps was on the field.

By half-past ten all were in position. Most of the troops had come long distances to the field, and the contents of haversacks were being investigated. Quick-sighted men those Saxons in the rear; they saw the eldest son of their king coming up from Noisy le Grand, and burst into a hearty cheer. The Prince had a detachment of Cuirassiers for his escort, and was accompanied by his staff. One word with his brother, and then he rode on to the right of the first line, and met General von Obernitz, of the Würtembergers. After a short conversation, he started for a tour of the lines. Before half-past eleven he was back, and everything was ready. But the videttes of the staff on the brow of the hill, among the flags and the triumphal arches, and the artificially-planted fir trees, and the rows of graves, were still motionless. The Emperor was late. Half-past eleven had been his set time, and he came not for another

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hour. The sky became overcast; rain began to fall just as we heard the sound of distant cheering. The Emperor's road lay right athwart the forefront of the battle-fields of the 30th November and 2nd of December. He had crossed the Marne at Joinville under a triumphal arch. Before he came to the railway arches he had passed the spot where 800 French dead are buried in one little field; his road was lined with graves right up to the big mounds under the park walls. This park—the mansion in which had been inhabited by a French lady, its courageous owner, right through the siege—he entered, and exchanged his travelling carriage for the back of a light chestnut horse. The Imperial Crown Prince, who accompanied him, rode to-day the same dark chestnut that had been his mount on the 1st. And then the Imperial party topped the rising ground between the flags, and the bands struck up. There was a little cheering, but not much. The Emperor rode to the front, and was met by the Crown Prince of Saxony. The meeting was very cordial. Then the parade inspection at once began, the Emperor, the Crown Prince of Saxony, and the Crown Prince of Prussia riding side by side. The Würtemberger infantry cheered moderately; the Bavarians were altogether silent. The Emperor playfully buckets his horse over the shell holes, and when the end of the first line was reached gave the staff a stretcher over some very rough country to the head of the second. There was more cheering among the artillery and cavalry, both Bavarian and Würtemberger. From the end of this line to the Saxons was quite a long canter. Some dodged it, and turned up in a good place when the "check" came before the Saxon Guards; but the Emperor sent his horse gaily over big ridges and furrows, and through vineyards and battery emplacements, only turning aside when graves

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came in the way. The Saxons were not enthusiastic. They were mad to be home, and they had just been ordered to march into "other catonments in the Ardennes." But presently they got over the sulks and cheered a little, especially the cavalry and artillery in the second line. Then the Emperor diverged to look into a siege battery on the Saxon left flank, and then there was a gallop back to a flagstaff in front of another battery, and the march past began—the Würtembergers first.

Right well do the Würtembergers march, with a long and yet decided step, and differing from us as regards their marching in this—that they swing in cadence the disengaged arm. Here comes Colonel von Brandenstein of the black whiskers, he who headed the assault which retook Champigny. Behind the infantry are the cavalry, and I notice Rittmeister Count Kronsfeld, who headed the only cavalry charge in the history of the siege of Paris. Of the Bavarians, but that they marched past splendidly, I have nothing to say, because I was not of their exploits the eye-witness. But here comes our own kindly Saxons, Prince George at their head. Here is Colonel Abendroth, who had three horses shot under him over the way there, and never a hair of his head singed. Jog on there, good old Oberst Hausen of the Schützen Regiment; Kaiser Wilhelm never looked on a better soldier than thee—and that regiment of thine, what valour it displayed, and what losses it sustained, following thee! There is "little Hammerstein," now a captain, but only a lieutenant on the 2nd of December, who though but a lieutenant yet commanded his battalion as it marched out of the fray, so deadly had been the slaughter of the officers. With a long English seat in the saddle comes General von Montbé, by whom I stood on the 21st of December, when the shells tumbled on to his

château in Clichy. And here comes Colonel Dietrich, of the 103rd, whom I have not seen since he turned aside from his dead Landwehrman in the park of Raincy. Behind him is a face I know well. Aha! Major von Schönberg, you may now soon see Frau Majorin, and I hope it may be my lot to drink one day with you a glass of beer in Kamenz; and here is Hammerstein and Kirchbach, and the adjutant and the doctor, the staunch fellows with whom I spent Christmas night under the lee of Avron. I wonder, von Zanthier, if that is the saddle you found on Avron? *Gott in Himmel!* Here comes Under-officer Schultz, as wooden as ever, yet with a kindly side glance for his Crown Prince, as he goes past pointing his toes as if for a wager.

The pageant is over; the last of our friends are past. The Emperor King makes off for Ferrières, the Crown Prince of Saxony going with him. Soon the environs of Paris will know no longer the Maas army. In two days the head-quarters were off to Compiègne, and all would set their faces homeward. Their home lies towards another point of the compass from mine, and so I take my leave of my comrades of two eventful months —comrades from whom I received kindnesses never to be forgotten. From prince to private I have experienced hearty Kameradschaft. The obligations I rest under to his Royal Highness the Crown Prince, General Schlotheim, and other members of the staff, are greater than I can describe. But the feeling of the staff permeated right down. I do not think there is a man in the Maas army who did not know me by sight, and was not aware of my avocation. We had been together in fair weather and in foul. We had made merry together. I had stood by and seen them fight; my hand had been pressed by the dying among them. I had looked down upon not a

few of them in the trench that did service for a grave. So let me take my hat off to the Maas army, in kindly and fraternal adieu, wishing well right heartily to every man in its ranks.

With the departure of the Emperor, the disruption of the armies, and the ratification of the peace preliminaries, the German position in the neighbourhood of Paris assumed a new phase, the unexpected prolongation of which must be inexpressibly wearisome to the homesick troops. The events referred to, to speak of small things after great, set at liberty the newspaper correspondents who had been with the German armies before Paris—more fortunate the correspondents than the soldiers, in that it was free to them to return home when they listed. I did not immediately avail myself of my privileges in this way. Ever since Sedan a change in the state of feeling between England and Germany had been observable, as expressed in the press of both countries. With an army in the field as far away from Germany as from England, it is obvious that the medium referred to was the only one at one's command through which to discern the nature of the relations between the two nations. But, in common as I dare say with many, I had learned to recognise the fact that the tone of a press is not always to be relied on as a wise and correct enunciation of the *vox populi*. The press of England evinced a jealousy lest German successes, followed by German unity, should stimulate Germany to a new *rôle* of general aggressiveness. The press of Germany, whether actuated by a spirit of irritated defiance, thrown off its balance by the flush of triumph, or accurately reflecting the tone of the nation which was its constituent, I could not tell, was characterised by an arrogant arbitrariness which seemed in a great measure to justify the expression of feeling on

the part of our own journalists. A short visit to Germany occurred to me as the readiest way of arriving at some estimate of German citizenhood as regards the alleged aggressive tendency of Germany superinduced by her acknowledged military supremacy and her successes in the war which has just terminated. It was obvious that a flying visit—and that was all that was in my power—did not admit of one hearing and seeing sufficient to enable him to speak with any great weight or assurance on a subject covering so wide a field; but, as feathers show which way the wind blows, *indicia* showing how the current of popular opinion sets will ever present themselves, unless a man goes about with his eyes and ears hermetically sealed. I desired also to see something of the manner in which the Germans should welcome home the first fruits of the victorious army, and also to witness the arrival of the Emperor in his capital after so long an absence. Before going to Berlin I spent a short time in Cologne and Bonn.

Before speaking of the feeling and temper of the German civilian citizenhood as to the future policy of Germany, let me first say a word as to the army. You don't keep men in the field for some eight months, and win ever so many battles, without making professional fighting animals of at least some of them. Officers, for instance, to whom piping times of peace would bring monotony, sluggish promotion, and the routine of garrison duty, lusted for continuous war with somebody, no matter whom. I venture to say that if England declared war to-morrow with any state in the known world, without the semblance of a provocation, the officers of the British army would hail the announcement with joy. Wherefore, when I heard in the Officer-Casino in Gonesse just before the armistice, a knot of young guardsmen

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praying for more fighting; and when one lad turned to me, and, clinking glasses, benignantly announced that the Queen Elizabeth Regiment would before two years were over be besieging Windsor Castle (which he evidently took to be our strongest fortress), I did not conclude that the German army was eager for a quarrel with England; but only asked my young friend whether he had learnt to swim. I had only to go outside into the road or up to the battery, or on to the outposts to find how the men of the army were sighing and longing for peace. They would do their duty to the last; would have followed my fire-eating youngster to the cannon's mouth; but they were hungry for home with an exceeding great hunger, and candidly owned that they wanted no more war in this their generation. For whereas young von Fähnrich was a professional soldier, they were citizens made soldiers by force of circumstances, and longing to return to their citizenhood. Depend upon it that so long as Germany wishes for peace she will never be embarrassed by the clamours of her army for war.

What said the citizens then: the *patres conscripti* who sat at home when the young men went to the war; the women of the nation, who in a free and cultivated people, such as the Germans, exercise so great an influence over the national bias and impulses? There seemed to me a surprisingly universal unanimity of conviction that Germany must be peaceful in the future, come what may, save absolute loss of honour. Flags were flying, crowds were cheering as the military train went by; but the people was shuddering and quivering again under the price of the victory. Wherever I went, I found under the pride and the bursts of gladness, stimulated by such a sight, a deep feeling of melancholy. The mourning warehouses in Cologne and Bonn must have driven a fine trade

this winter. The streets swarmed with men on crutches. I met a pleasant group in the Rheingasse of Bonn one forenoon—four of them—and there were three capable legs among the four. They bore the number of a regiment that I knew before Metz, and which afterwards went to the north; and we had a little chat together. Private soldiers all the four, mark you; but let me give their professions, because it is of importance to my argument. One was the son of a master tailor; the second was the tenter of a steam-engine in a factory; the third had been the apprentice of an emigration agent; and the fourth had had a shop of his own which his absence at the war had ruined and shut up. Hard, was it not, to lose a leg and your living at one *coup*, even if it be for the Fatherland? It is owing to the presence—and, according to her military constitution, the inevitable presence—of such men in her ranks that Germany is perforce a country averse from war. It is because so many of this class are now no longer in her ranks, because they are rotting under the soil of French battle-fields, that she shudders and blenches at the name of war, even while she cheers her heroes. It is because she feels that the war has cost her so much of her lifeblood, of the real bone and sinew of her stirring business population, not of mere waste cannon fodder, that she has exacted terms so hard from France—terms that, as she reckons, make it impossible that France in sanity will ever again disturb the peace of the Fatherland.

Statistics of relative losses in such a war as that just over, I take to be of little value. In any war it seems to me that you must regard, not so much the quantity as the quality of the losses, if you wish accurately to gauge the virtual depletion of either contending nationality. So far as I was able to learn, the French loss lay for by

far the most part at either end of the social string. The old maxim of *noblesse oblige* held good at all events to an extent which was not discreditable. Then there was a great gulf, for the bourgeoisie had an intense respect for their skins. The Frenchmen of the rank and file who have fallen victims in this war may be said, and that without any intention to impugn the value of their sacrifice, to represent quantity rather than quality. They were rank and file, and their best friends could say little more of them. The army never was able to claim to be a national one in the highest sense. What sort of an army is that of Germany as to its rank and file has never been rightly appreciated, spite of explanations, however long and lucid, as to its character as a distinctively national army. Those familiar with German newspapers know the death notices surviving relatives and friends are fond of inserting to commemorate their deceased kinsfolk. The idea occurred to me to go through a file of the *Cologne Gazette* for a month, and extract the professions of such deceased private soldiers and non-commissioned officers of the German armies as were commemorated therein in this way. I made no selection, but took name after name, wherever I found the profession designated. Here, copied from my notebook as I took them out, is the list of professions, rigidly restricted to private soldiers and non-commissioned officers:—Tavern-keeper, medical student, merchant, clothier, cabinetmaker, son of a public accountant, master modeller, steamship superintendent, upholsterer, barrister, schoolmaster, lecturer in a public school, head forester, medical student, engineer, post-office clerk, son of chief administrator of mines, academy student, son of a superintendent, brewer, the Count of Salm Hoogstraeten, medical student. Of course many hundreds died uncom-

memorated, who were not, in the sense to which I am referring, such valuable members of society. But then, when the dead list of the rank and file of an army must perforce, from the constitution of that army, comprehend men so valuable as the above in a politico-economical sense, who will have hardihood enough to say that the nation owning that army dare crave for war, or indeed have any other feeling thereanent but that of horror—a horror only to be overridden by the strongest necessity?

Experience has convinced me of the inutility of "interviewing." You set a man at once to weighing his words, and he either gammons you intentionally, buncomises, or is reticent, so as to be of no service. Everybody who knows Bonn knows the Rheinecke, and everybody who knows the Rheinecke knows the nightly meeting of responsible citizens over the bottle of Rhine wine. The night of my arrival I sat down at the end of the long table, with the *Cologne Gazette* in my hand as a make-belief, and, keeping my mouth shut, kept my ears open. Of course there was not a word save about the war and matters thereanent. A corpulent gentleman was great on tactics, and while he was rather depreciatory of the Duke of Mecklenburg, expressed profound admiration of von Werder. But what chiefly struck me was the conversation as to the terms of the peace. A quiet, sagacious person said plainly he thought the money indemnity was too great. It was not an indemnity he said, it was a premium on war. Another struck in with the rejoinder that the indemnity was exacted, not alone for the money charges which the war had cost the Germans, but for the cost of life and blood, as well as the stagnation of profitable industry which it had caused. The quiet man sighed as he replied that there were losses for which no money indemnity could com-

pensate. "Do you think," said he, "I reckoned my poor dead Carl by the milliard?" On the territorial annexation all were united. It was a necessary preservative of peace for Germany. But for this necessity, Metz was a nuisance rather than otherwise. One gentleman was not contradicted when he alleged that if Germany could have got a guarantee against any future aggressiveness on the part of France, she would not have demanded an inch of territory—not even Alsace. "What do you mean by a guarantee though?" asked his neighbour;—"A French guarantee?" "*Gott bewahr!*" was the emphatic response—"Thiers' guarantee to-day might be kicked to the devil in two years by an Orleanist, the weak President of a red-hot Republic; no, I mean an European guarantee." Then a Professor of the University made an observation which I quote simply as an indication of the horror with which the possibility of a future war is regarded. "Sooner," said he, "than in ten or twelve years' time my sons should run the chance of being maimed and killed in a war with France, I would gladly see now every village in France burnt, every deed done against her, even to actual extermination of her population, that would guarantee us against the possibility of our peace ever again being disturbed by her." It is strange how intense can be a craving for peace that can prompt to a contingent blood-thirstiness so uncompromising as this.

It was quite in consonance with the German character that there should not be any manifestation of cock-a-whoop exultation among the people by reason of the victorious campaign just concluded. The feeling of sedate satisfaction seemed to find vent chiefly in flags and universal good humour. You might jostle anybody you liked; and whereas he might under normal conditions growl not a little, now he turned unto you a smiling face

as if to say you might do it again and he would not quarrel with you, so complaisant was he in his quiet realisation of what the Americans call a "good time." It seemed as if in those first weeks of peace most people were celebrating the event by refraining from doing any work; and stationing themselves from day to day in great groups in the neighbourhood of the railway stations, to watch their fighting brethren pass through on their way home. A considerable proportion of the population of Bonn had apparently permanently bivouacked in the avenue adjoining the railway station. Hour after hour they stood there—men, women, and children, as if they could never have enough of gazing. They stood under a perfect forest of flags, and they had made a kind of bower with evergreen branches, which was turned to the practical use of a depôt for refreshments, to be served to the occupants of the passing trains. On an average there was one of these about every hour, and a curious sight the military train was. For the two days of my stay in Bonn the passing troops chiefly consisted of Westphalian Hussars, and those bold warriors took huge delight in mounting upon the tops of the carriages, and from this elevated position waving hand flags while they cheered vehemently. A vocal contingent inside sang without intermission the "Wacht am Rhein." At the sight of the train the waiting crowd would waken up and burst into reciprocal cheering. The sedate satisfaction for the time gave place to a modified ecstasy. The boys clambered up beside the Hussars and gave the tenor to the bass cheering of the soldiers. The women pushed to the front regardless of the squeeze. A blousy frau is in the first rank, baby in arms, shouting an inquiry, addressed miscellaneously, about a certain Johann, who, probably enough, occupies the position of male parent to

the embryo Hussar in her arms. A hairy Hussar leans over a truck, deftly kisses the frau, and annexes feloniously the baby, which he elevates triumphantly into mid-air, the young Teuton crowing and kicking in huge enjoyment. A baby in a military train, full of Landwehrmen coming home from the war! Here is a prize, indeed. The frau seems half pleased, half inclined to be frightened, as her urchin is passed hand over hand along the roofs of the carriages, each temporary possessor of the living morsel giving it a kiss and a cunning tickle that speaks of paternal habit before he parts with it. Curious how a baby may dispel the grave forebodings of a pacific professor. Such a grave and reverend seignor stood beside me as the train came up with its cheering freight. "Alas!" quoth he, "for the evil influences of war. I recognise in these faces a savagery that was not to be seen when the fellows passed through, six months ago, on their way to the war. They have tasted blood, and the fell meal shows itself in their faces." Truly, in a sense, the Professor was right. The faces had got bronzed and hair matted. There was a truculency in their aspect, and a buccaneering air discernible, that might be taken as a memento of high-handed requisitioning and long chases after Francs-tireurs. I think the air was in a great measure assumed for the occasion, for we know the weakness of human nature. But the baby drove the savagery out of the faces, and stamped out the buccaneering swagger, so that Herr Professor owned himself satisfied, with the reservation that he hoped all the Hussars were married men with families.

None of the Bonn Johnnies coming marching home arrived in this particular train I am speaking of, with the exception of a single Landwehrman. I saw this Landwehrman disembark. He was a living proof that

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fluids of an inebriating character exist on the road traversed by the train previous to its arrival in Bonn. In point of fact, our Bonn Landwehrman was pretty considerably drunk. But drunk as he was, it was plain that he realised the fact that he had his character to maintain in his native place. It was with portentous solemnity that he emerged from the station, inadvertently carrying his arms reversed. A porter followed bearing his knapsack. Another brought his havresack, his drinking flask with the cork out and plainly empty, and a few other trifles. Once outside, our Landwehrman halted and blandly surveyed his fellow-townsmen. It seemed as if he was about to give them his blessing. But he had forgotten to report himself at the Etappen Commando. You should have seen the effort he made to straighten himself up, and go right about into a creditable manner. While he is complying with the demands of discipline, there is a stir in the throng, which results in the advent of the identical frau, whose baby the Hussar had looted. She has recovered said baby, severely tousled. It appears that the solemnly inebriated is Johann, the lawful spouse of the frau, and parent of the baby, as well as of a ladder-like assortment of elder hopes. The frau, it is clear, admits the prior claims of the Etappen Commando, nor seeks to intrude on the interval sacred to duty. She compensates herself for the self-restraint by tumbling bodily, baby and all, upon Johann the moment he gets outside. There is a curious miscellaneous group, in the posturing of which baby gets squeezed and begins to squall, Johann's face appearing at intervals from behind his wife. In the glimpses it is apparent that Johann is blubbering. The frau unlocks herself, and presents unto her husband their family member by member, till the top step of the ladder is

reached, and then a sort of informal procession is formed for the homeward route. Johann is visibly limper under the influence of family emotion, yet he straightens himself up every now and then, and throws out his shoulders as he glances down at the iron cross in his button-hole. He is denuded of every impediment. A mob of children surround him and the frau, contending for the honour of carrying something belonging to the hero. A neighbour has the baby, so that the frau may devote herself exclusively to Johann. Probably enough on the morrow you might have met that honest fellow in his civilian clothes going about the avocation he had relinquished when called on to go and fight for the Fatherland.

In the throng continually by the railway station one could not but be sensible of a certain sombreness in the dress of the women. Likely enough at first one did not come to draw any inference from this. There was the sombreness, just as when a cloud comes between the sun and a landscape, a mere fleeting accident. But the sombreness of colour in this throng was no fleeting accident. You came to realise that before you were a strange number of women dressed in black, in which crape profusely showed itself. Crape and cheering! Mourning and the joyous reunion of husband and wife, father and children! Were these kill-joys of malice prepense who came out among us with their weepers and weeds to dull with their trappings of woe the gladness and the triumph? Ah, for these crape-wearers—and they are many this day all over the Fatherland—there was no joy, no gladsome reunion. Your triumph! What was your triumph on this pale woman with the drawn face and haggard eyes, and with the three children, who now looked wonderingly into their mother's face, and now joined, unwitting of their bereavement, in the fun

of their young comrades, to whom the war had left fathers? One asked himself why they came here? Why does the moth come to the candle? There must, I suppose, be a kind of pleasurable torture in a fresh pang, a kind of exquisite poignancy not to be resisted. One saw but little manifestation of acute emotion among those sable-clad spectators. Surely in most cases the bitterness of death must have been past.

The train rolled on with its huzzaing freight, and the bustle in the crowd lapsed for a while. But not for long. Here comes an hospital train, its engines decorated with evergreens. If you look at the windows of the long carriages, built on the American model, you may see the poor wounded fellows raising themselves on their elbows in their narrow cots, to look out upon their countryfolk. It is only for privileged people that there is admission to the platform of the station while the ambulance train is drawn up there; sympathisers, however warm, are in the way when delicate work has to be done systematically. On the platform one sees ready a number of mattressed stretchers, for Bonn has no fewer than fourteen lazarettes, and in addition numerous private families have virtually turned their houses into hospitals. Members of the committee come out of their store-room, and take each so many carriages to supply with such refreshments as the inmates may be allowed to receive. Here is the head doctor, a tough old boy to be sure. The first time I saw him was in the château at Amelange, on the 7th October, a suture-needle behind his ear, and his hands in such a state that I respectfully declined to shake them. Since then he has been all through the northern campaign, and is doing good work right to his own door. An upright man and a just, he candidly owns he has not time to gossip, and must go

see to the disembarkation of such of his patients as are to be left in Bonn. Here is one of them, a hollow-eyed under-officer, on this stretcher, with his coat thrown over him. He seems all but comatose, yet see how he manages feebly to disengage a hand to turn out the breast of his coat, so as not to hide the iron cross hanging there. By the look of him, I fear it will task the Bonn surgeons to bring him round. Here is the head doctor in a passion, and bullying quite vehemently. Well, after all, doctor, it is natural enough. He is a Bonn man, it seems, this hussar Wachtmeister, and these are Bonn-folk that are crowding about him. But the doctor is right; you must let the air in about him, good people, and so give ground. The Wachtmeister seems a philosopher, lying there with one of his legs the Lord knows where. There is a quiet, amused smile on his handsome face, and he seems to be relishing his cigar. It is clear the Wachtmeister does not quite belong to himself. A strapping, good-looking girl has quietly but potently taken possession of him, and none challenge her title. She stands fast by the head of the stretcher, while the rest give ground at the mandate of the surgeon, and there is the air of conscious property in the business-like manner in which she gives her directions as to lifting and moving her complaisant goods and chattel. A brave girl truly—fit to be a soldier's wife of the Mrs. Colonel O'Dowd stamp. If the doctor cared to lay his finger on her pulse this minute, I'd bet a good deal he'd find it over a hundred! How near she is to hysterics those tell-tale twitchings about the corners of the mouth and swellings of the throat give evidence, yet gallantly she maintains her composure, and gives her instructions as if she were telling the people how to boil a potato or scrub a floor.

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It froze hard in Berlin during the night preceding March the 17th, the day of the Emperor's home-coming; and morning brought bright sun and cloudless sky. It brought also an universal ebullition of bunting. A crowd had collected in the morning under the statue of the Great Fritz opposite the Imperial Schloss. The crowd was drawn by a banner which floated from the pedestal, having a long poem stamped on the black and white linen. "Hail Kaiser Wilhelm, hail to thee and to the brave German host thou leadest back from victory, ghost-like from afar. Like the clash of distant bells sounds the glad cheering of the conquerors. Old Fritz looks down with proud glance upon his descendants, approving greatly their valour." So opened the poem which struck home to the sympathies of the crowd so heartily that a policeman relaxed into rubbing his hands. Meantime an adventurous youth, with a flag in his hand, had climbed up, and sat astraddle of Old Fritz's helmet, waving his banner proudly. All the forenoon the preparations in the way of decorations and for the illumination steadily went on. The lazarettes were not behindhand in an humble way, and it was touching to see the poor broken fellows elaborating their simple decorations. At one o'clock came guard-mounting. On this important day the guard was found by the 2nd Guard and the Kaiser Franz Regiments, and consisted wholly of soldiers who had come back from the war. I recognised among the stalwart fellows, marching to the strains of the Paris March, not a few old familiàr faces that brought to mind Le Bourget, Stains, Pierrefitte, and Le Blanc Mesnil. Long before four o'clock every street was crowded, the throng being specially dense by the station, where the great people had begun to arrive to await the Royal arrival. The Princess Frederick Charles, Queen Elizabeth,

and the Baden family were among the earliest arrivals. A great cheer rang out as Count Bismarck, bluff and smiling, drove up with his wife in an open carriage. In the reserved portion of the platform all were in uniform or court dresses. Here was staunch old Marshal von Wrangel in the uniform of a White Cuirassier, rather bandy, but good seemingly for another twenty years. Here was Prince George, more familiar with the pen—a bad one—than the sword, wrapped in a large cloak, with an attendant bearing his helmet of state. He had a chat with a Jäger private with one leg, who had got somehow in the forefront. Here too was General Vogel von Falkenstein, grey and grim; and von Steinmetz, all the way from his Posen governorship. But the list was too long for enumeration. Every pillar of the long station was in a flutter of flags; on those on either side of the royal passage were blazoned the words Metz and Strassburg, while over the statues of Victory behind were Sedan and Paris. Was it by accident or design that opposite the platform on a siding an ambulance train had been halted, from the windows of which pallid faces looked out with hollow eyes on the brilliant scene? Its roof was clustered with convalescents, and a little squad of men maimed at Spicheren and Courcelles gave Steinmetz a cheer—old "Immer Vorwärts," as they lovingly styled him—and so with gossip and endless kindly salutations the moments of expectancy fleeted by.

Twenty minutes later, at the sound of a shrill distant whistle, out of the waiting-room stalked Count Bismarck in full war paint; Wrangel doffed his plumed helmet; a stream of ladies and children followed Bismarck's stalwart form; in three minutes more a near rumble, and the train, bedizened with flags, rolled into the siding. Three carriages passed a flight of steps, and the fourth came

into sight; there rose a mighty cheer, and at the window stood the Emperor Wilhelm, framed as in a picture. The old man's face was working as the cheers rang in his ears. He was down the steps and kissing the Dowager Queen Elizabeth. What! would the women of his family mob him, then, as they crowded round him for his kisses, while grandchildren hung about his knees? No wonder that he had to brush his eyes with the back of his hand as he struggled through the women folk before him. In his path stood the white figure of Wrangel, the rays of the setting sun flashing on his snow-white hair. The soldier-patriarch raised his hand, and tried to lead off a cheer, but his voice failed him, and the tears rolled down his face. His master, not less moved, kissed his servant on either cheek. The two old soldier comrades embraced, while one of Steinmetz's wounded fellows headed, from the top of the carriage, a real rousing cheer. Then the Emperor grasped Bismarck by the hand, and kissed him too. He served von Steinmetz in the same manner with special cordiality, as if to refute the calumnies anent that gallant soldier. He kissed his way right through out of sight into the waiting-room, the Empress following him with a look of conscious ownership; and so exit Kaiser Wilhelm.

Behind him as he came from the carriage was a younger face, that of his son. I wondered the Princess was not jealous to see all these pretty girls, princesses, grand duchesses, and what not, hugging her husband "with effusion." But not she. She had fast hold of his right arm, and she looked about so proudly and gladly, the light of love in every feature. Her back hair had come down and it streamed over her shoulders in beautiful confusion. It was comical to see how she gently extricated "Our Fritz" from the press, when it seemed as

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if there had been enough of the kissing. But, then, the Prince had hairier faces to kiss, and more stalwart forms to embrace ere he reached the haven of the saloon. Von Roon, von Meydam, all the well-known Versailles faces followed, and then the women burst into the reserved space, and hugged and kissed the staff men who belonged to them as they came out of the carriages. The scene was like an April day, showers and sunshine, tears and smiles in about equal proportions—all state and ceremony went down before the gush of homely affection. The Emperor almost at once passed to his carriage, and drove off unescorted at a trot, followed by carriages containing the Royal Family and the other personages, along the Thier Garten, through the Brandenburg gate, and down Unter den Linden to the Palace, amidst immense cheering. As he passed under the arch the Imperial flag was run up on the palace. The cheering continued after he alighted. His Majesty lingered on the threshold, and at length went in; but his subjects were not to be denied, and he had to appear again on the balcony, helmet in hand and the Empress on his arm. His last appearance was at the window of the corner room where he showed himself on the declaration of the war, and here he listened to the Wacht am Rhein, sung by the crowd. The Imperial Crown Prince had also to come repeatedly to an open window of his palace, accompanied by his wife and their children; the eldest boy, dressed in full Uhlan uniform, especially delighting the people. The Princess, with her eldest son, had accompanied the Empress to Wildpark.

On the morning of the 22nd March, the Emperor's birthday, Berlin received her first regular consignment of home-coming warriors, in the shape of the 1st Battalion of the 2nd Guard Landwehr Regiment. The battalion

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had gone out over 1,000 strong; I do not care to estimate how far beneath that number it mustered as it marched down the Linden on the bright March morning. It was never my fortune to see the Guard Landwehr men fight, but Versailles correspondents have told Britain in graphic language how they held the park-wall of St. Cloud against all comers in the fierce fight of the 19th of January. It was no child's play that day, as this battalion gave proofs in its shortened column of fours as it strode along behind the band of the 3rd Guard Regiment, who played their comrades in. Nearly all the men had bound green wreaths round their helmets. Some had stuck nosegays in the muzzle of their needle-guns; others carried chaplets on their bayonets. Big muscular fellows all of them, of set frames and mature years, hair to the eyes, and clumsy rather of build and gait, but of rare weight and toughness—troops that evidently knew the meaning of fighting, and had good fight in them as a matter of course and quite in the way of business.

After their Kaiser had had a look at them, and they had marched past the palace, the battalion broke into companies, each company taking a different direction to a halting point. I accompanied the 2nd company through the Friedrich Strasse to the top of the Jäger Strasse. While it was in the Linden rigorous discipline was the order of the day. But it relaxed somewhat in the Friedrich Strasse, and the people got among their martial fellow-citizens. It made one laugh, though mirth was not the sole emotion, to see the women claim their husbands, throw arms round their necks and kiss them heartily; while the honest fellows, fain to reciprocate, had still to keep step and not materially lose their dressing. Once the women-folk got possession of the men that belonged to them, there was no parting these twain of one flesh,

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